MANUALS OF THE INNER LIFE

LAW'S SERIOUS CALL

Edited and Abridged by
R. GORDON MILBURN

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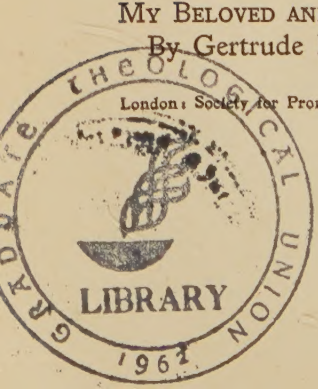

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PREFACE

'I HAVE indeed from childhood owned "A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life," but I have never really known it.' So writes the late Professor Du Bose. Is it not true that this is an extremely common case—the rule, rather than the exception, among those who have got so far as to possess or to partially read the book? People will not give it the time and renewed attention which is required before its message can have a chance of penetrating to the will and conscience of the reader. For the 'Serious Call,' or, at least, the main gist of it, should be read over and over again. For this purpose an abridgement may, under modern circumstances, be even more useful than the complete book itself, provided that what it presents is the real gist and pith of the original.

I believe that the following selection of passages contains the whole gist of

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the 'Serious Call,' although it is not very much more than one quarter of its length. (In this calculation I do not, of course, include the two sections from Law's later writings.) The only leading thought not included in it is perhaps Law's defence of indiscriminate almsgiving (on the ground of the Divine example and the impulsion of love to give), which Law argues at about the length of a page and a half in Chapter VIII. It will be seen that the selection contains at least one passage from every chapter. Two calendars are provided. In the first one continuous passage is assigned to every day of the month. But the passage is broken up into sections of a length suitable for devotional reading. There are three exceptions to this rule On the twelfth day of the month two sections are given which do not form one continuous passage, although they are logically connected. On the twenty-seventh the two sections are not quite continuous—about the length of a sec-

tion between them is omitted; and on the thirty-first day a final section (No 58) is added which is neither continuous with the preceding section nor continuous in itself. On the other hand, the passages for the fourteenth, the twenty-third, and the twenty-fifth are continuous with the passages for the preceding days.

In the Alternative Calendar readings uniformly consisting of one section are arranged for a course of two months. In addition to the passages in the first Calendar I have included in this alternative arrangement two of Law's character sketches and two passages from Law's later works taken from Mr. Scott Palmer's 'Liberal and Mystical Writings of William Law.' This brings the number of sections up to sixty-two. In a third appendix passages from the eighteenth and nineteenth chapters of the 'Serious Call' not adapted to the purpose of public hortatory reading are given, and finally a summary of Law's devotional system.

I hope that no apology is needed for the inclusion of the second appendix as a brief indication of the direction taken by Law's later thought. Some critics may regret that I have quoted two only of the character sketches which occur in the 'Serious Call.' My aim, however, has been to present the main gist of the 'Serious Call' and these characters are but incidental illustrations.

CALENDAR

Day of the Month.	Section or Sections.	Chapter from which taken.	Subject.
1	1, 2	I.	Religion and common life.
2	3, 4	II.	Intention and fulfilment.
3	5, 6	,,	,, ,,
4	7	III.	The narrow way.
5	8, 9, 10	IV.	God's claim on the whole of life.
6	11, 12	,,	God's claim on the whole of life.
7	13	,,	God's claim on the whole of life.
8	14	V.	God's claim on the whole of life.
9	15	VI.	The use of money.
10	16, 17	,,	,, ,,
11	18	VIII.	Living by rule.
12	19, 20	VII., IX.	Failure to progress. Clothes.
13	21, 22	X.	Nature and reason.
14	23, 24	,,	Consistency.
15	25	,,	What is Christianity ?
16	26	XI.	Unnecessary wants.
17	27, 28, 29	,,	The rationality of religion.
18	30, 31	XIV.	Early rising.
19	32, 33	,,	The first step in self-mortification.
20	34	XV.	Thankfulness.
21	35	XVI.	The hidden shame.
22	36, 37, 38	XVII.	The meaning of the Cross.
23	39, 40	,,	The Christian World.
24	41, 42, 43	XX.	Universal love
25	44, 45, 46, 47	,,	,, ,,

CALENDAR

Day of the Month.	Section or Sections.	Chapter from which taken.	Subject.
26	48	XXI.	Intercession.
27	49, 50	,,	Masters and parents.
28	51	,,	Contempt.
29	52, 53, 54	XXII.	Providence; resignation.
30	55	,,	,, ,,
31	56, 57, 58	XIV. XXIII.	The life of prayer.

Sections 59, 60, 61, 62 occur in the Alternative Calendar only. Section 63 (on Education, comprising passages from chapters XXIV, XVIII, and XIX) is suitable for private reading only.

ALTERNATIVE CALENDAR

FIRST MONTH, OR MORNING READINGS.

Day.	Section.	Day.	Section.	Day.	Section.
1	1	12	12	22	22
2	2	13	13	23	23
3	3	14	14	24	24
4	4	15	15	25	25
5	5	16	16	26	26
6	6	17	17	27	27
7	7	18	18	28	28
8	8	19	19	29	29
9	9	20	20	30	30
10	10	21	21	31	31
11	11				

SECOND MONTH, OR EVENING READINGS.

Day.	Section.	Day.	Section.	Day.	Section.
1	32	10	41	19	50
2	33	11	42	20	51
3	34	12	43	21	52
4	35	13	44	22	53
5	36	14	45	23	54
6	37	15	46	24	55
7	38	16	47	25	56
8	39	17	48	26	57
9	40	18	49	27	58

Day of the Month.	Section or Sections.	Chapter from which taken.	Subject.
28	59	XII.	A fortunate woman.
29	60	XIII.	A successful man.
30	61	,,	From *The Spirit of Prayer.*
31	62	,,	From *An Address to the Clergy.*

INTRODUCTION

'A SERIOUS CALL' is one of the greatest of religious books ever written. It is great in many ways.

1. It is great, in the first place, as that which it professes to be: a call to live a truly Christian life. Its power in this respect is so well known that I will not dwell upon it. It is suitable, not only for private study, but also for family prayers and for reading in church in place of one of the lessons. For the 'Serious Call' is as inspired as much of the New Testament itself.

2. Secondly, 'A Serious Call' is probably by far the best exposition of Christian ethics which we possess. It is neither a catalogue of virtues commended in the Bible, nor a critical account of New Testament thought written from a detached and non-committal standpoint, nor yet an exposition of current British morals in Biblical language. It is a passionately earnest confession of faith in real and

distinctive *Christian* ethics. It sets forth the actual ethics of the New Testament itself from the standpoint of a man who thought like an apostle but had his eyes fixed on the circumstances of modern life. (Surely I need not apologise for regarding Negotius and Feliciana as thorough moderns?) Law's book is especially valuable in the uncompromising truthfulness with which it puts before us what are the genuinely Christian principles with regard to what the New Testament calls 'the world.' These are not principles which we either act upon or preach to-day. All the more useful therefore must this statement of them be.

3. 'A Serious Call' is noteworthy, thirdly, in its conception of Christianity as primarily a distinctive way of life, system of practical principles, a code, a law, a dharma. Although this corresponds with New Testament usage, it is not the ordinary way of regarding religion. Christianity is usually looked upon as primarily a system of beliefs.

To be sure, an obligation to be moral is also included in the idea of Christian religion. But the primary emphasis has been upon belief. A 'doctrine' means a proposition asserting some supernatural fact. For Law, however, 'the doctrines of Christianity' means 'the principles of Christian life.' 'If the doctrines of Christianity,' he says, 'were practised they would make a man as different from other people as to all worldly tempers, sensual pleasures, and the pride of life, as a wise man is different from a natural [an idiot]; it would be as easy a thing to know a Christian by his outward course of life as it now is difficult to find anybody that lives it.' And again, 'Our Blessed Saviour and his Apostles are wholly taken up in doctrines that relate to common life.' Law's reversion to this primitive conception of doctrine is far from being motivated by any lack of belief in beliefs. But, with him, doctrine is only emphasised in so far as it is the correlative of life. The providence of

God, the love of God, the death upon the Cross, the future life—they are all, for Law, bound up with attitudes of the Christian will, attitudes which express themselves in a specific way of life. In such a matter as this, treatment is everything. And it is Law's peculiarity that he never handles doctrine in abstraction from life, but always in subordination to it, just as he never accepts emotion as a substitute for a right determination of the will.

4. In the fourth place, 'A Serious Call' is a most important document for a right understanding of Christian mysticism—more important, indeed, than any of Law's later writings. It is extraordinary that lovers of Christian mysticism should not have recognised the great significance of the 'Serious Call' from this point of view. For mysticism does not consist in taking pleasure in beautiful ideas touched with metaphysics. Anyone can repeat the language of immanence and of unity. Mysticism is a certain direction of

desire and of will. It consists in the real turning of the self from the temporal to the eternal, from the world to God, from the things of sense to the things of the spirit. It is a renunciation of the world and of the flesh by the soul in order that it may become more capable of receiving God. It is the steadfast will, inspired by a longing for God, towards self-purification. It is a reckless enterprise, the quest of the absolutely Real, which demands, almost as its initial step, the sacrifice of one's birthright as a creature of this world.

This is the active side of mysticism, and might be called 'theotropy,' just as its receptive side has been called theopathy. Theotropy is the presupposition of theopathy; apart from it mysticism is merely sensibility to ideas of a certain kind; it is not real mysticism at all; it is a triviality.

It is as a striking example of the literature of *theotropy* that the 'Serious Call' is so valuable, and all the more so as its mysticism is so unconscious. It

possesses no appropriate philosophical categories whereby to express itself; it knows only the language of a theology most inadequate to its purpose—in this respect resembling the mysticism of Christ himself. The provision of a mystical metaphysic is, indeed, requisite to the development of a complete mysticism. But it is of great value to have an expression of the Godward-striving element in mysticism uninfluenced by the terminology of mysticism. We then see the mystical spirit seeking to find expression and to cut a channel for itself where no such channel existed before. We see this in the Synoptic gospels, and we see it in the 'Serious Call.'

Let any student of mysticism read the following passages; if he cannot see the mysticism in them, in good sooth he is but a poor student of his subject.

'Every exhortation to be spiritual and heavenly, pressing after a glorious change of our nature.'

'The more we find out God in everything, the more we apply to Him in every place, the more we look up to Him in all our actions, the more we conform to His will, the more we act according to His wisdom and imitate His goodness, by so much the more do we enjoy God.'

'As everything is dark that God does not enlighten; as everything is senseless that has not its share of knowledge from Him; as nothing lives but by partaking of life from Him; as nothing exists but because He commands it to be; so there is no glory or greatness but what is of the glory and greatness of God.'

'But now if God be thus in all; if His will is thus the measure of all things and all natures; if nothing can be done but by His power; if nothing can be seen but by a light from Him; if we have nothing to fear but from His justice; if we have nothing to hope for but from His goodness; if this is the nature of man, thus helpless in himself; if this is the state of all creatures, as

well those in Heaven as those on earth; if they are nothing, can do nothing, can suffer no pain, nor feel any happiness, but so far, and in such degrees, as the power of God does all this; if this be the state of things, then how can we have the least glimpse of joy or comfort, how can we have any peaceful enjoyment of ourselves, but by living wholly unto that God, using and doing everything conformably to His will?'

'Christianity supposes, intends, desires, and aims at nothing else but the raising fallen man to a Divine life.'

'"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." He that feels the force and spirit of these words can hardly bear any human interpretation of them.'

'That you may look for nothing, claim nothing, resent nothing; that you may go through all the actions and accidents of life calmly and quietly, as in the presence of God, looking wholly for Him: neither seeking vain applause nor resenting neglects or affronts, but

doing and receiving everything in the meek and lowly spirit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'

'Now, the noblest motive to this universal tenderness and affection is founded in this doctrine: "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."'

'Who, therefore, whose heart has any tendency towards God, would not aspire after this Divine temper, which so changes and exalts our nature into an union with Him?'

'How should we rejoice in the exercise and practice of this love, which, so often as we feel it, is so often an assurance to us that God is in us, that we act according to His Spirit, who is Love itself! But we must observe that love has then only this mighty power of uniting us to God when it is so pure and universal as to imitate that love which God beareth to all His creatures.'

But it is not so much a few noteworthy passages as the spirit and tendency of the whole book which

marks it out, in spite of its lack of Neoplatonism, as one of the greatest products of Christian mysticism.

5. Apart also from Law's mysticism, the Progressiveness, as it would generally be considered, of Law's contentions in the second and third appendices to this collection has its root, not in any extraneous influence, but in the general position maintained in the 'Serious Call' itself. The most prominent characteristic of that position is, perhaps, its universalism—its insistence upon God's rightful sovereignty over *all* departments of human life (including, therefore, the sphere of national interests); upon universal love to *all* mankind; and upon the recognition of a universal Reason and true Nature implanted in *all* men as the basis of religion. This is the source of Law's religious toleration, his international ethics, his pacificism, and his, at least incipient, feminism. The real springs of progress are not always the surface waters.

FIRST DAY OF THE MONTH

1. OUR blessed Saviour and His Apostles are wholly taken up in doctrines that relate to common life. They call us to renounce the world, and differ in every temper and way of life from the spirit and the way of the world : to renounce all its goods, to fear none of its evils, to reject its joys, and have no value for its happiness : to be as new-born babes that are born into a new state of things : to live as pilgrims in spiritual watching, in holy fear, and heavenly aspiring after another life : to take up our daily cross, to deny ourselves, to profess the blessedness of poverty of spirit : to forsake the pride and vanity of riches, to take no thought for the morrow, to live in the profoundest state of humility, to rejoice in worldly sufferings ; to reject the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life : to bear injuries, to forgive and bless our enemies, and to love mankind as God loveth them : to give

up our whole hearts and affections to God, and strive to enter through the strait gate into a life of eternal glory.

This is the common devotion which our blessed Saviour taught in order to make it the common life of all Christians. Is it not, therefore, exceeding strange that people should place so much piety in the attendance upon public worship, concerning which there is not one precept of our Lord's to be found, and yet neglect these common duties of our ordinary life which are commanded in every page of the Gospel? I call these duties the devotion of our common life because, if they are to be practised, they must be made parts of our common life; they can have no place anywhere else.

If contempt of the world and heavenly affection is a necessary temper of Christians, it is necessary that this temper appear in the whole course of their lives, in their manner of using the world, because it can have no place anywhere else. If self-denial be a

condition of salvation, all that would be saved must make it a part of their ordinary life. If humility be a Christian duty, then the common life of a Christian is to be a constant course of humility in all its kinds. If poverty of spirit be necessary, it must be the spirit and temper of every day of our lives. If we are to relieve the naked, the sick, and the prisoner, it must be the common charity of our lives, as far as we can render ourselves able to perform it. If we are to love our enemies, we must make our common life a visible exercise and demonstration of that love. If content and thankfulness, if the patient bearing of evil be duties to God, they are the duties of every day and in every circumstance of our life. If we are to be wise and holy as the new-born sons of God, we can no otherwise be so but by renouncing everything that is foolish and vain in every part of our common life. If we are to be in Christ new creatures, we must show that we are so, by having

new ways of living in the world. If we are to follow Christ, it must be in our common way of spending every day.

2. Thus it is in all the virtues and holy tempers of Christianity; they are not ours unless they be the virtues and tempers of our ordinary life. So that Christianity is so far from leaving us to live in the common ways of life, conforming to the folly of customs, and gratifying the passions and tempers which the spirit of the world delights in, it is so far from indulging us in any of these things that all its virtues which it makes necessary to salvation are only so many ways of living above and contrary to the world in all the common actions of our life. If our common life is not a common course of humility, self-denial, renunciation of the world, poverty of spirit, and heavenly affection, we do not live the lives of Christians.

But yet though it is thus plain that this, and this alone, is Christianity, a uniform, open, and visible practice of

all these virtues, yet it is as plain that there is little or nothing of this to be found even amongst the better sort of people. You see them often at church, and pleased with fine preachers: but look into their lives and you see them just the same sort of people as others are that make no pretences to devotion. The difference that you find betwixt them is only the difference of their natural tempers. They have the same taste of the world, the same worldly cares, and fears, and joys; they have the same turn of mind, equally vain in their desires. You see the same fondness for state and equipage, the same pride and vanity of dress, the same self-love and indulgence, the same foolish friendships and groundless hatreds, the same levity of mind and trifling spirit, the same fondness for diversions, the same idle dispositions and vain ways of spending their time in visiting and conversation as the rest of the world that makes no pretences to devotion.

I do not mean this comparison be-

twixt people seemingly good at professed rakes, but betwixt people of sober lives. Let us take an instance in two modest women: let it be supposed that one of them is careful of times of devotion and observes them through a sense of duty, and that the other has no hearty concern about it, but is at church seldom or often, just as it happens. Now it is a very easy thing to see this difference betwixt these persons. But when you have seen this, can you find any farther difference betwixt them? Can you find their common life is of a different kind? Are not the tempers and customs and manners of the one of the same kind as of the other? Do they live as if they belonged to different worlds, had different views in their heads and different rules and measures of all their actions? Have they not the same goods and evils? Are they not pleased and displeased in the same manner and for the same things? Do they not live in the same course of life? Does one seem to be of this world,

looking at the things that are temporal, and the other to be of another world, looking wholly at the things that are eternal? Does the one live in pleasure, delighting herself in show or dress, and the other live in self-denial and mortification, renouncing everything that looks like vanity, either of person, dress, or carriage? Does the one follow public diversions and trifle away her time in idle visits and corrupt conversation, and does the other study all the arts of improving her time, living in prayer and watching, and such good works as may make all her time turn to her advantage and be placed to her account at the last day? Is the one careless of expense, and glad to be able to adorn herself with every costly ornament of dress, and does the other consider her fortune as a talent given her by God, which is to be improved religiously and no more to be spent in vain and needless ornaments than it is to be buried in the earth? Where must you look to find one person of

religion differing in this manner from another that has none? And yet if they do not differ in these things which are here related, can it with any sense be said the one is a good Christian and the other not?

SECOND DAY

3. THE reason why professed Christians fail to live above and contrary to the world is the same reason that makes swearing so common a vice, although it is one which is so easily avoided.[1]

Now the reason of common swearing is this: it is because men have not so much as the intention to please God in all their actions. For let a man but have so much piety as to intend to please God in all the actions of his life, as the happiest and best thing in the world, and then he will never swear more. It will be as impossible for him to swear, whilst he feels this intention within himself, as it is impossible for a man that intends to please his prince to go up and abuse him to his face.

It seems but a small and necessary part of piety to have such a sincere intention as this; and that he has no

[1] Condensed.

reason to look upon himself as a disciple of Christ who is not thus far advanced in piety. And yet it is purely for want of this degree of piety that you see such a mixture of sin and folly in the lives even of the better sort of people. It is for want of this intention that you see men that profess religion, yet live in swearing and sensuality; that you see clergymen given to pride, and covetousness, and worldly enjoyments. It is for want of this intention that you see women that profess devotion, yet living in all the folly and vanity of dress, wasting their time in idleness and pleasures, and in all such instances of state and equipage as their estates will reach. For let but a woman feel her heart full of this intention and she will find it as impossible to patch or paint as to curse or swear; she will no more desire to shine at balls or assemblies or make a figure amongst those that are most finely dressed, than she will desire to dance upon a rope to please spectators; she will know that the one is

as far from the wisdom and excellency of the Christian spirit as the other.

It was this general intention that made the primitive Christians such eminent instances of piety, and made the goodly fellowship of the saints and all the glorious army of martyrs and confessors. And if you will here stop and ask yourselves why you are not as pious as the primitive Christians were, your own heart will tell you that it is neither through ignorance nor inability, but purely because you never thoroughly intended it. You observe the same Sunday worship that they did ; and you are strict in it because it is your full intention to be so. And when you as fully intend to be like them in their ordinary common life, when you intend to please God in all your actions, you will find it as possible as to be strictly exact in the service of the Church. And when you have this intention to please God in all your actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world, you will find in you as great an

aversion to everything that is vain and impertinent in common life, whether of business or pleasure, as you now have to anything that is profane. You will be as fearful of living in any foolish way, either of spending your time or your fortune, as you are now fearful of neglecting the public worship.

4. Now, who that wants this general sincere intention can be reckoned a Christian? And yet if it were among Christians it would change the whole face of the world; true piety and exemplary holiness would be as common and visible as buying and selling or any trade in life.

Let a clergyman be but thus pious and he will converse as if he had been brought up by an Apostle; he will no more think and talk of noble preferment than of noble eating, or a glorious chariot. He will no more complain of the frowns of the world, or a small cure, or the want of a patron, than he will complain of the want of a laced coat

or a running horse. Let him but intend to please God in all his actions, as the happiest and best thing in the world, and then he will know that there is nothing noble in a clergyman but a burning zeal for the salvation of souls; nor anything poor in his profession but idleness and a worldly spirit.

Again, let a tradesman but have this intention and it will make him a saint in his shop; his every-day business will be a course of wise and reasonable actions, made holy to God by being done in obedience to His will and pleasure. He will buy and sell, and labour and travel, because by so doing he can do some good to himself and others. But then, as nothing can please God but what is wise, and reasonable, and holy, so he will neither buy nor sell, nor labour in any other manner, nor to any other end, but such as may be shown to the wise and reasonable and holy. He will therefore consider, not what arts, or methods, or application, will soonest

make him richer and greater than his brethren or remove him from a shop to a life of state and pleasure; but he will consider what arts, what methods, what application can make worldly business most acceptable to God, and make a life of trade a life of holiness, devotion, and piety. This will be the temper and spirit of every tradesman; he cannot stop short of these degrees of piety, whenever it is his intention to please God in all his actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world. And, on the other hand, whoever is not of this spirit and temper in his trade and profession, and does not carry it on only so far as is best subservient to a wise, and holy, and heavenly life, it is certain that he has not this intention; and yet without it, who can be shown to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

THIRD DAY

5. AGAIN, let the gentleman of birth and fortune but have this intention and he will devote all his wealth to the service of God.[1]

He will waste no money in gilded roofs or costly furniture; he will not be carried from pleasure to pleasure in expensive state and equipage, because an inspired Apostle hath said that 'all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.'

Let not anyone look upon this as an imaginary description of charity, that looks fine in the notion but cannot be put in practice. For it is so far from being an imaginary, impracticable form of life, that it has been practised by great numbers of Christians in former ages, who were glad to turn their whole

[1] (Condensed.) Law explains, in his characterisation of the ideal figure of Miranda, what he means by this devotion of our wealth to God.

estates into a constant course of charity. And it is so far from being impossible now that if we can find any Christians that sincerely intend to please God in all their actions, as the best and happiest thing in the world, whether they be young or old, single or married, men or women, if they have but this intention it will be impossible for them to do otherwise. This one principle will infallibly carry them to this height of charity, and they will find themselves unable to stop short of it.

For how is it possible for a man that intends to please God in the use of his money, and intends it because he judges it to be his greatest happiness; how is it possible for such a one, in such a state of mind, to bury his money in needless, impertinent finery, in covering himself or his horses with gold, whilst there are any works of piety and charity to be done with it, or any ways of spending it well?

This is as strictly impossible as for a man that intends to please God in his

words, to go into company on purpose to swear and lie. For as all waste and unreasonable expense is done designedly and with deliberation, so no one can be guilty of it whose constant intention is to please God in the use of his money.

I have chosen to explain this matter by appealing to this intention, because it makes the case so plain, and because everyone that has a mind may see it in the clearest light and feel it in the strongest manner, only by looking into his own heart. For it is as easy for every person to know whether he intends to please God in all his actions as for any servant to know whether this be his intention towards his master. Everyone also can as easily tell how he lays out his money, and whether he considers how to please God in it, as he can tell where his estate is, and whether it be in money or land. So that here is no plea left for ignorance or frailty as to this matter; everybody is in the light, and everybody has power. And no one can fail but he that is not so

much a Christian as to intend to please God in the use of his estate.

6. You see two persons: one is regular in public and private prayer, the other is not. Now the reason of this difference is not this, that one has strength and power to observe prayer and the other has not; but the reason is this, that one intends to please God in the duties of devotion and the other has no intention about it. Now the case is the same in the right or wrong use of our time and money. You see one person throwing away his time in sleep and idleness, in visiting and diversions, and his money in the most vain and unreasonable expenses. You see another careful of every day, dividing his hours by rules of reason and religion and spending all his money in works of charity; now the difference is not owing to this, that one has strength and power to do thus and the other has not; but it is owing to this, that one intends to please God in the right use of all his

time and all his money and the other has no intention about it.

Here, therefore, let us judge ourselves sincerely; let us not vainly content ourselves with the common disorders of our lives, the vanity of our expenses, the folly of our diversions, the pride of our habits, the idleness of our lives, and the wasting of our time, fancying that these are such imperfections as we fall into through the unavoidable weakness and frailty of our natures; but let us be assured that these disorders of our common life are owing to this, that we have not so much Christianity as to intend to please God in all the actions of our life, as the best and happiest thing in the world. So that we must not look upon ourselves in a state of common and pardonable imperfection, but in such a state as wants the first and most fundamental principle of Christianity, viz., an intention to please God in all our actions.

And if any one were to ask himself how it comes to pass that there are any

degrees of sobriety which he neglects, any practices of humility which he wants, any method of charity which he does not follow, any rules of redeeming time which he does not observe, his own heart will tell him that it is because he never intended to be so exact in those duties. For whenever we fully intend it, it is as possible to conform to all this regularity of life as it is possible for a man to observe times of prayer.

So that the fault does not lie here, that we desire to be good and perfect, but through the weakness of our nature fall short of it; but it is because we have not piety enough to intend to be as good as we can, or to please God in all the actions of our life.

FOURTH DAY

7. THE salvation of our souls is set forth in Scripture as a thing of difficulty, that requires all our diligence, that is to be worked out with fear and trembling.

We are told that 'strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.' That 'many are called, but few are chosen.' And that many will miss of their salvation who seem to have taken some pains to obtain it: as in these words, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.'

Here our blessed Lord commands us to strive to enter in, because many will fail who only seek to enter. By which we are plainly taught that religion is a state of labour and striving, and that many will fail of their salvation, not because they took no pains or care about it, but because they did not take

pains and care enough; they only sought, but did not strive to enter in.

Every Christian, therefore, should as well examine his life by these doctrines as by the commandments. For these doctrines are as plain marks of our condition as the commandments are plain marks of our duty.

For if salvation is only given to those who strive for it, then it is as reasonable for me to consider whether my course of life be a course of striving to obtain it, as to consider whether I am keeping any of the commandments.

If my religion is only a formal compliance with those modes of worship that are in fashion where I live; if it costs me no pains or trouble; if it lays me under no rules and restraints; if I have no careful thoughts and sober reflections about it, is it not great weakness to think that I am striving to enter in at the strait gate?

If I am seeking everything that can delight my senses and regale my appetites; spending my time and for-

tune in pleasures, in diversions, and worldly enjoyments; a stranger to watchings, fastings, prayers, and mortification, how can it be said that I am working out my salvation with fear and trembling?

If there is nothing in my life and conversation that shows me to be different from Jews and heathens; if I use the world, and worldly enjoyments, as the generality of people now do, and in all ages have done, why should I think that I am amongst those few who are walking in the narrow way to Heaven?

8. As a good Christian should consider every place as holy, because God is there, so he should look upon every part of his life as a matter of holiness, because it is to be offered unto God.

The profession of a clergyman is a holy profession, because it is a ministration in holy things, an attendance at the altar. But worldly business is to be made holy unto the Lord by being

done as a service to Him and in conformity to His Divine will.

For as all men, and all things in the world, as truly belong unto God as any places, things, or persons that are devoted to Divine service, so all things are to be used, and all persons are to act in their several states and employments for the glory of God.

Men of worldly business, therefore, must not look upon themselves as at liberty to live to themselves, to sacrifice to their own humours and tempers, because their employment is of a worldly nature. But they must consider that, as the world and all worldly professions as truly belong to God, as persons and things that are devoted to the altar, so it is as much the duty of men in worldly business to live wholly unto God as it is the duty of those who are devoted to Divine service.

As the whole world is God's, so the whole world is to act for God. As all men have the same relation to God, as all men have all their powers and

faculties from God, so all men are obliged to act for God with all their powers and faculties.

As all things are God's, so all things are to be used and regarded as the things of God. For men to abuse things on earth and live to themselves is the same rebellion against God as for angels to abuse things in Heaven; because God is just the same Lord of all on earth as He is the Lord of all in Heaven.

Things may, and must, differ in their use, but yet they are all to be used according to the will of God.

Men may, and must, differ in their employments, but yet they must all act for the same ends, as dutiful servants of God, in the right and pious performance of their several callings.

Clergymen must live wholly unto God in one particular way—that is, in the exercise of holy offices, in the ministration of prayers and sacraments, and a zealous distribution of spiritual goods.

But men of other employments are, in their particular ways, as much obliged to act as the servants of God and live wholly unto Him in their several callings.

This is the only difference between clergymen and people of other callings.

When it can be shown that men might be vain, covetous, sensual, worldly-minded, or proud in the exercise of their worldly business, then it will be allowable for clergymen to indulge the same tempers in their sacred profession. For though these tempers are most odious and most criminal in clergymen, who, besides their baptismal vow, have a second time devoted themselves to God, to be His servants, not in the common offices of human life, but in the spiritual service of the most holy sacred things, and who are, therefore, to keep themselves as separate and different from the common life of other men, as a church or an altar is to be kept separate from houses and tables of common use ;

yet as all Christians are by their baptism devoted to God and made professors of holiness, so are they all in their several callings to live as holy and heavenly persons; doing everything in their common life only in such a manner as it may be received by God as a service done to Him. For things spiritual and temporal, sacred and common, must, like men and angels, like Heaven and earth, all conspire in the glory of God.

FIFTH DAY

9. AS there is but one God and Father of us all, whose glory gives light and life to everything that lives, whose presence fills all places, whose power supports all beings, whose providence ruleth all events, so everything that lives, whether in Heaven or earth, whether they be thrones or principalities, men or angels, they must all, with one spirit, live wholly to the praise and glory of this one God and Father of them all. Angels as angels, in their heavenly ministrations; but men as men, women as women, bishops as bishops, priests as priests, and deacons as deacons; some with things spiritual and some with things temporal, offering to God the daily sacrifice of a reasonable life, wise actions, purity of heart, and heavenly affections.

This is the common business of all persons in this world. It is not left to any women in the world to trifle away

their time in the follies and impertinences of a fashionable life, nor to any men to resign themselves up to worldly cares and concerns; it is not left to the rich to gratify their passions in the indulgences and pride of life, nor to the poor to vex and torment their hearts with the poverty of their state; but men and women, rich and poor, must, with bishops and priests, walk before God in the same wise and holy spirit, in the same denial of all vain tempers, and in the same discipline and care of their souls; not only because they have all the same rational nature and are servants of the same God, but because they all want the same holiness to make them fit for the same happiness to which they are all called. It is, therefore, absolutely necessary for all Christians, whether men or women, to consider themselves as persons that are devoted to holiness, and so order their common ways of life, by such rules of reason and piety as may turn it into continual service unto Almighty God.

10. Now to make our labour or employment an acceptable service unto God we must carry it on with the same spirit and temper that is required in giving of alms or any work of piety. For, if 'whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do,' we must 'do all to the glory of God'; if 'we are to use this world as if we used it not'; if we are to 'present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God'; if 'we are to live by faith, and not by sight,' and to 'have our conversation in heaven'; then it is necessary that the common way of our life, in every state, be made to glorify God by such tempers as make our prayers and adorations acceptable to Him. For if we are worldly or earthly-minded in our employments, if they are carried on with vain desires and covetous tempers only to satisfy ourselves, we can no more be said to live to the glory of God than gluttons and drunkards can be said to eat and drink to the glory of God.

As the glory of God is one and the same thing, so whatever we do suitable to it must be done with one and the same spirit. That same state and temper of mind which makes our alms and devotions acceptable, must also make our labour, or employment, a proper offering unto God. If a man labours to be rich, and pursues his business, that he may raise himself to a state of figure and glory in the world, he is no longer serving God in his employment; he is acting under other masters, and has no more title to a reward from God than he that gives alms that he may be seen, or prays that he may be heard of men. For vain and earthly desires are no more allowable in our employments than in our alms and devotions. For these tempers of worldly pride and vain-glory are not only evil, when they mix with our good works, but they have the same evil nature, and make us odious to God, when they enter into the common business of our employment. If it were allowable to indulge covetous or

vain passions in our worldly employments, it would then be allowable to be vain-glorious in our devotions. But as our alms and devotions are not an acceptable service but when they proceed from a heart truly devoted to God, so our common employment cannot be reckoned a service to Him but when it is performed with the same temper and piety of heart.

SIXTH DAY

11. IT is, therefore, absolutely certain that no Christian is to enter any farther into business, nor for any other ends, than such as he can in singleness of heart offer unto God as a reasonable service. For the Son of God has redeemed us for this only end, that we should, by a life of reason and piety, live to the glory of God; this is the only rule and measure for every order and state of life. Without this rule the most lawful employment becomes a sinful state of life.

Take away this from the life of a clergyman and his holy profession serves only to expose him to a greater damnation. Take away this from tradesmen, and shops are but so many houses of greediness and filthy lucre. Take away this from gentlemen, and the course of their life becomes a course of sensuality, pride, and wantonness. Take away this rule from our tables, and all falls into gluttony and drunkenness.

Take away this measure from our dress and habits, and all is turned into such paint, and glitter, and ridiculous ornaments, as are a real shame to the wearer. Take away this from the use of our fortunes, and you will find people sparing in nothing but charity. Take away this from our diversions, and you will find no sports too silly, nor any entertainments too vain and corrupt, to be the pleasure of Christians.

If, therefore, we desire to live unto God, it is necessary to bring our whole life under this law, to make His glory the sole rule and measure of our acting in every employment of life. For there is no other true devotion, but this of living devoted to God in the common business of our lives.

So that men must not content themselves with the lawfulness of their employments, but must consider whether they use them, as they are to use everything, as strangers and pilgrims that are baptised into the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that are to follow Him in a wise

and heavenly course of life, in the mortification of all worldly desires, and in purifying and preparing their souls for the blessed enjoyment of God.

For to be vain, or proud, or covetous, or ambitous, in the common course of our business, is as contrary to these holy tempers of Christianity as cheating and dishonesty.

If a glutton were to say, in excuse of his gluttony, that he only eats such things as it is lawful to eat, he would make as good an excuse for himself as the greedy, covetous, ambitious tradesman that should say he only deals in lawful business. For, as a Christian is not only required to be honest, but to be of a Christian spirit, and make his life an exercise of humility, repentance, and heavenly affection, so all tempers that are contrary to these are as contrary to Christianity as cheating is contrary to honesty.

So that the matter plainly comes to this: all irregular tempers in trade and business are but like irregular tempers in eating and drinking.

12. Proud views and vain desires in our worldly employments are as truly vices and corruptions as hypocrisy in prayer or vanity in alms. And there can be no reason given why vanity in our alms should make us odious to God but what will prove any other kind of pride to be equally odious. He that labours and toils in a calling that he may make a figure in the world and draw the eyes of people upon the splendour of his condition, is as far from the pious humility of a Christian as he that gives alms that he may be seen of men. For the reason why pride and vanity in our prayers and alms renders them an unacceptable service to God, is not because there is anything particular in prayers and alms that cannot allow of pride, but because pride is in no respect, nor in anything, made for man; it destroys the piety of our prayers and alms, because it destroys the piety of everything that it touches, and renders every action that it governs incapable of being offered unto God.

So that if we could so divide ourselves as to be humble in some respects and proud in others, such humility would be of no service to us, because God requires us as truly to be humble in all our actions and designs, as to be true and honest in all our actions and designs.

And as a man is not honest and true, because he is so to a great many people, or upon several occasions, but because truth and honesty is the measure of all his dealings with everybody, so the case is the same in humility, or any other temper; it must be the general ruling habit of our minds, and extend itself to all our actions and designs, before it can be imputed to us.

We indeed sometimes talk as if a man might be humble in some things and proud in others; humble in his dress, but proud of his learning; humble in his person, but proud in his views and designs. But though this may pass in common discourse, where few things are said according to strict truth, it

cannot be allowed when we examine into the nature of our actions.

It is very possible for a man that lives by cheating to be very punctual in paying for what he buys; but then everyone is assured that he does not do so out of any principle of true honesty.

In like manner it is very possible for a man that is proud of his estate, ambitious in his views, or vain of his learning, to disregard his dress and person in such a manner as a truly humble man would do; but to suppose that he does so out of a true principle of religious humility is full as absurd as to suppose that a cheat pays for what he buys out of a principle of religious honesty.

As, therefore, all kinds of dishonesty destroy our pretences to an honest principle of mind, so all kinds of pride destroy our pretences to a humble spirit.

No one wonders that those prayers and alms, which proceed from pride and ostentation, are odious to God;

but yet it is as easy to show that pride is as pardonable there as anywhere else.

If we could suppose that God rejects pride in our prayers and alms but bears with pride in our dress, or persons, or estates, it would be the same thing as to suppose that God condemns falsehood in some actions but allows it in others. For pride in one thing differs from pride in another thing, as the robbing of one man differs from the robbing of another.

SEVENTH DAY

13. THE principle that religion, properly understood, extends itself to all the actions of our common life,[1] shows us :—

That we must eat and drink, and dress and discourse, according to the sobriety of the Christian spirit, engage in no employments but such as we can truly devote unto God, nor pursue them any farther than so far as conduces to the reasonable ends of a holy, devout life.—That we must be honest, not only on particular occasions and in such instances as are applauded in the world, easy to be performed and free from danger or loss, but from such a living principle of justice as makes us love truth and integrity in all its instances, follow it through all dangers and against all opposition ; as knowing that the more we pay for any truth the better is our bargain, and that then our integrity becomes a pearl when we

[1] Slightly condensed.

have parted with all to keep it.—That we must be humble, not only in such instances as are expected in the world or suitable to our tempers, or confined to particular occasions, but in such a humility of spirit as renders us meek and lowly in the whole course of our lives, as shows itself in our dress, our person, our conversation, our enjoyment of the world, the tranquillity of our minds, patience under injuries, submission to superiors, and condescensions to those that are below us, and in all the outward actions of our lives.—That we must devote not only times and places to prayer, but be everywhere in the spirit of devotion; with hearts always set towards Heaven, looking up to God in all our actions and doing everything as His servants; living in the world as in a holy temple of God, and always worshipping Him, though not with our lips, yet with the thankfulness of our hearts, the holiness of our actions, and the pious and charitable use of all His gifts.—That we must not only send up

petitions and thoughts to Heaven, but must go through all our worldly business with a heavenly spirit, as members of Christ's mystical body; that, with new hearts and new minds, we may turn an earthly life into a preparation for a life of greatness and glory in the kingdom of Heaven. Now the only way to arrive at this piety of spirit is to bring all your actions to the same rule as your devotions and alms. You very well know what it is that makes the piety of your alms or devotions; now the same rules, the same regard to God, must render everything else that you do a fit and acceptable service unto God.

EIGHTH DAY

14. AS sure as God is one God, so sure it is that He has but one command to all mankind, whether they be bond or free, rich or poor; and that is to act up to the excellency of that nature which He has given them, to live by reason, to walk in the light of religion, to use everything as wisdom directs, to glorify God in all His gifts, and dedicate every condition of life to His service.

This is the one common command of God to all mankind. If you have an employment, you are to be thus reasonable and pious and holy in the exercise of it; if you have time and a fortune in your own power, you are obliged to be thus reasonable and holy and pious in the use of all your time and all your fortune.

The right religious use of everything and every talent is the indispensable duty of every being that is capable of knowing right and wrong.

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For the reason why we are to do anything as unto God, and with regard to our duty and relation to Him, is the same reason why we are to do everything as unto God and with regard to our duty and relation to Him.

That which is a reason for our being wise and holy in the discharge of all our business is the same reason for our being wise and holy in the use of all our money.

As we have always the same natures, and are everywhere the servants of the same God, as every place is equally full of His presence, and everything is equally His gift, so we must always act according to the reason of our nature; we must do everything as the servants of God; we must live in every place as in His presence; we must use everything as that ought to be used which belongs to God.

Either this piety and wisdom and devotion is to go through every way of life, and to extend to the use of

everything, or it is to go through no part of life.

If we might forget ourselves, or forget God, if we might disregard our reason and live by humour and fancy in any thing, or at any time, or in any place, it would be as lawful to do the same in every thing, at every time, and every place.

If, therefore, some people fancy that they must be grave and solemn at church, but may be silly and frantic at home; that they must live by some rule on the Sunday, but may spend other days by chance; that they must have some times of prayer, but may waste the rest of their time as they please; that they must give some money in charity, but may squander away the rest as they have a mind; such people have not enough considered the nature of religion or the true reasons of piety. For he that upon principles of reason can tell why it is good to be wise and heavenly-minded at church, can tell that it is

always desirable to have the same tempers in all other places. He that truly knows why he should spend any time well, knows that it is never allowable to throw any time away. He that rightly understands the reasonableness and excellency of charity will know that it can never be excusable to waste any of our money in pride and folly, or in any needless expenses.

NINTH DAY

15. IF we waste our money we are not only guilty of wasting a talent which God has given us, we are not only guilty of making that useless which is so powerful a means of doing good, but we do ourselves this further harm, that we turn this useful talent into a powerful means of corrupting ourselves; because so far as it is spent wrong, so far it is spent in support of some wrong temper, in gratifying some vain and unreasonable desires, in conforming to those fashions and pride of the world which, as Christians and reasonable men, we are obliged to renounce.

As wit and fine parts cannot be trifled away, and only lost, but will expose those that have them into greater follies, if they are not strictly devoted to piety; so money, if it is not used strictly according to reason and religion, can not only be trifled away, but it will betray people into greater follies and

make them live a more silly and extravagant life than they could have done without it. If, therefore, you do not spend your money in doing good to others, you must spend it to the hurt of yourself. You will act like a man that should refuse to give that as a cordial to a sick friend, though he could not drink it himself without inflaming his blood. For this is the case of superfluous money; if you give it to those that want it, it is a cordial; if you spend it upon yourself in something that you do not want, it only inflames and disorders your mind and makes you worse than you would be without it.

Consider again the forementioned comparison; if the man that would not make a right use of spare eyes and hands should, by continually trying to use them himself, spoil his own eyes and hands, we might justly accuse him of still greater madness

Now this is truly the case of riches spent upon ourselves in vain and needless expenses; in trying to use them

where they have no real use, nor we any real want, we only use them to our great hurt, in creating unreasonable desires, in nourishing ill tempers, in indulging our passions, and supporting a worldly, vain turn of mind. For high eating and drinking, fine clothes and fine houses, state and equipage, gay pleasures and diversions, do all of them naturally hurt and disorder our hearts; they are the food and nourishment of all the folly and weakness of our nature, and are certain means to make us vain and worldly in our tempers. They are all of them the support of something that ought not to be supported; they are contrary to that sobriety and piety of heart which relishes Divine things; they are like so many weights upon our minds, that make us less able and less inclined to raise up our thoughts and affections to the things that are above.

So that money thus spent is not merely wasted or lost, but it is spent to bad purposes and miserable effects, to the corruption and disorder of our

hearts, and to the making us less able to live up to the sublime doctrines of the Gospel. It is but like keeping money from the poor to buy poison for ourselves.

For so much as is spent in the vanity of dress may be reckoned so much laid out to fix vanity in our minds. So much as is laid out for idleness and indulgence may be reckoned so much given to render our hearts dull and sensual. So much as is spent in state and equipage may be reckoned so much spent to dazzle your own eyes and render you the idol of your own imagination. And so in everything, when you go from reasonable wants you only support some unreasonable temper, some turn of mind, which every good Christian is called upon to renounce.

So that on all accounts, whether we consider our fortune as a talent and trust from God, or the great good that it enables us to do, or the great harm that it does to ourselves if idly spent; on all these great accounts it appears

that it is absolutely necessary to make reason and religion the strict rule of using all our fortune.

Every exhortation in Scripture to be wise and reasonable, satisfying only such wants as God would have satisfied; every exhortation to be spiritual and heavenly, pressing after a glorious change of our nature; every exhortation to love our neighbour as ourselves, to love all mankind as God has loved them, is a command to be strictly religious in the use of our money.

TENTH DAY

16. WHAT is the rule, therefore, or measure of performing these good works? How shall a man trust that he performs them as he ought?

Now the rule is very plain and easy, and such as is common to every other virtue or good temper as well as to charity. Who is the humble, or meek, or devout, or just, or faithful man? Is it he that has several times done acts of humility, meekness, devotion, justice, or fidelity? No; but it is he that lives in the habitual exercise of these virtues. In like manner, he only can be said to have performed these works of charity who lives in the habitual exercise of them to the utmost of his power. He only has performed the duty of Divine love who loves God with all his heart and with all his mind and with all his strength. And he only has performed the duty of these good works who has done them with all his heart and with all his mind and with all his strength.

For there is no other measure of our doing good than our power of doing it.

The Apostle St. Peter puts this question to our blessed Saviour : ' Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven.' Not as if after this number of offences a man might then cease to forgive ; but the expression of seventy times seven is to show us that we are not to bound our forgiveness by any number of offences, but are to continue forgiving the most repeated offences against us. Thus our Saviour saith in another place, ' If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent ; thou shalt forgive him.' If, therefore, a man ceases to forgive his brother because he has forgiven him often already ; if he excuses himself from forgiving this man because he has forgiven several others, such a one breaks

this law of Christ concerning the forgiving one's brother.

Now the rule of forgiving is also the rule of giving: you are not to give, or do good, to seven, but to seventy times seven. You are not to cease from giving because you have given often to the same person or to other persons, but must look upon yourself as much obliged to continue relieving those that continue in want as you were obliged to relieve them once or twice. Had it not been in your power you had been excused from relieving any person once; but if it is in your power to relieve people often it is as much your duty to do it often as it is the duty of others to do it but seldom, because they are but seldom able. He that is not ready to forgive every brother as often as he wants to be forgiven, does not forgive like a disciple of Christ. And he that is not ready to give to every brother that wants to have something given him, does not give like a disciple of Christ. For it is as necessary to give to seventy times seven, to live in the continual exercise

of all good works to the utmost of our power, as it is necessary to forgive until seventy times seven and live in the habitual exercise of this forgiving temper towards all that want it.

17. And the reason of all this is very plain, because there is the same goodness, the same excellency, and the same necessity of being thus charitable at one time as at another. It is as much the best use of our money, to be always doing good with it, as it is the best use of it at any particular time, so that that which is a reason for a charitable action is as good a reason for a charitable life. That which is a reason for forgiving one offence is the same reason for forgiving all offences. For such charity has nothing to recommend it to-day but what will be the same recommendation of it to-morrow; and you cannot neglect it at one time without being guilty of the same sin as if you neglected it at another time.

As sure, therefore, as these works of charity are necessary to salvation, so

sure is it that we are to do them to the utmost of our power; not to-day or to-morrow, but through the whole course of our life. If, therefore, it be our duty at any time to deny ourselves any needless expenses, to be moderate and frugal, that we may have to give to those that want, it is as much our duty to do so at all times, that we may be further able to do more good. For if it is at any time a sin to prefer needless vain expense to works of charity, it is so at all times, because charity as much excels all needless and vain expenses at one time as at another. So that if it is ever necessary to our salvation to take care of these works of charity and to see that we make ourselves in some degree capable of doing them, it is as necessary to our salvation to take care to make ourselves as capable as we can be of performing them in all the parts of our life.

Either, therefore, you must so far renounce your Christianity as to say that you need never perform any of these good works, or you must own

that you are to perform them all your life in as high a degree as you are able. There is no middle way to be taken any more than there is a middle way betwixt pride and humility or temperance and intemperance. If you do not strive to fulfil all charitable works, if you neglect any of them that are in your power, and deny assistance to those that want what you can give, let it be when it will or where it will, you number yourself amongst those that want Christian charity, because it is as much your duty to do good with all that you have, and to live in the continual exercise of good works, as it is your duty to be temperate in all that you eat and drink.

Hence also appears the necessity of renouncing all those foolish and unreasonable expenses which the pride and folly of mankind have made so common and fashionable in the world. For if it is necessary to do good works as far as you are able, it must be as necessary to renounce those needless ways of spending money which render you unable to do works of charity.

You must therefore no more conform to these ways of the world than you must conform to the vices of the world; you must no more spend with those that idly waste their money as their own humour leads them, than you must drink with the drunken or indulge yourself with the epicure, because a course of such expenses is no more consistent with a life of charity than excess in drinking is consistent with a life of sobriety. When, therefore, anyone tells you of the lawfulness of expensive apparel or the innocence of pleasing yourself with costly satisfactions, only imagine that the same person was to tell you that you need not do works of charity, that Christ does not require you to do good unto your poor brethren as unto Him and then you will see the wickedness of such advice. For to tell you that you may live in such expenses as make it impossible for you to live in the exercise of good works is the same thing as telling you that you need not have any care about such good works themselves.

ELEVENTH DAY

18. ANY one pious regularity of any one part of our life is of great advantage, not only on its own account but as it uses us to live by rule and think of the government of ourselves.

A man of business that has brought one part of his affairs under certain rules is in a fair way to take the same care of the rest.

So he that has brought any one part of his life under the rules of religion may thence be taught to extend the same order and regularity into other parts of his life.

If any one is so wise as to think his time too precious to be disposed of by chance and left to be devoured by anything that happens in his way; if he lays himself under a necessity of observing how every day goes through his hands and obliges himself to a certain order of time in his business, his retirements, and devotions, it is hardly to be imagined how soon such a

conduct would reform, improve, and perfect the whole course of his life.

He that once thus knows the value, and reaps the advantage, of a well-ordered time will not long be a stranger to the value of anything else that is of any real concern to him.

A rule that relates even to the smallest part of our life is of great benefit to us, merely as it is a rule.

For, as the proverb saith, 'He that has begun well has half done': so he that has begun to live by rule has gone a great way towards the perfection of his life.

By rule, must here be constantly understood, a religious rule observed upon a principle of duty to God.

For if a man should oblige himself to be moderate in his meals only in regard to his stomach, or abstain from drinking only to avoid the headache, or be moderate in his sleep through fear of a lethargy, he might be exact in these rules without being at all the better man for them.

But when he is moderate and regular in any of these things out of a sense of Christian sobriety and self-denial, that he may offer unto God a more reasonable and holy life, then it is that the smallest rule of this kind is naturally the beginning of great piety.

For the smallest rule in these matters is of great benefit, as it teaches us some part of the government of ourselves, as it keeps up a tenderness of mind, as it presents God often to our thoughts and brings a sense of religion into the ordinary actions of our common life.

If a man, whenever he was in company where any one swore, talked lewdly, or spoke evil of his neighbour, should make it a rule to himself, either gently to reprove him, or, if that was not proper, then to leave the company as decently as he could, he would find that this little rule, like a little leaven hid in a great quantity of meal, would spread and extend itself through the whole form of his life.

If another should oblige himself to

abstain on the Lord's day from any innocent and lawful things, as travelling, visiting, common conversation and discoursing upon worldly matters, as trade, news, and the like, if he should devote the day, besides the public worship, to greater retirement, reading, devotion, instruction, and works of charity, though it may seem but a small thing or a needless nicety, to require a man to abstain from such things as may be done without sin, yet whoever would try the benefit of so little a rule would perhaps thereby find such a change made in his spirit, and such a taste of piety raised in his mind as he was an entire stranger to before.

It would be easy to show, in many other instances, how little and small matters are the first steps and natural beginnings of great perfection.

TWELFTH DAY

19. PERSONS that are well affected to religion, that receive instructions of piety with pleasure and satisfaction, often wonder how it comes to pass that they make no greater progress in that religion which they so much admire.

Now the reason of it is this: it is because religion lives only in their head, but something else has possession of their heart, and therefore they continue from year to year mere admirers and praisers of piety, without ever coming up to the reality and perfection of its precepts.

If it be asked why religion does not get possession of their hearts, the reason is this: it is not because they live in gross sins or debaucheries, for their regard to religion preserves them from such disorders, but it is because their hearts are constantly employed, perverted, and kept in a wrong state by the indiscreet use of such things as are lawful to be used.

The use and enjoyment of their estate is lawful, and therefore it never comes into their heads to imagine any great danger from that quarter. They never reflect that there is a vain and imprudent use of their estate, which, though it does not destroy like gross sins, yet so disorders the heart and supports it in such sensuality and dulness, such pride and vanity, as makes it incapable of receiving the life and spirit of piety.

For our souls may receive an infinite hurt, and be rendered incapable of all virtue, merely by the use of innocent and lawful things.

What is more innocent than rest and retirement? And yet what more dangerous than sloth and idleness? What is more lawful than eating and drinking? And yet what more destructive of all virtue, what more fruitful of all vice, than sensuality and indulgence?

How lawful and praiseworthy is the care of a family! And yet how certainly are many people rendered in-

capable of all virtue by a worldly and solicitous temper!

Now it is for want of religious exactness in the use of these innocent and lawful things that religion cannot get possession of our hearts. And it is in the right and prudent management of ourselves, as to these things, that all the art of holy living chiefly consists.

Gross sins are plainly seen and easily avoided by persons that profess religion. But the indiscreet and dangerous use of innocent and lawful things, as it does not shock and offend our consciences, so it is difficult to make people at all sensible of the danger of it.

A gentleman that expends all his estate in sports, and a woman that lays out all her fortune upon herself, can hardly be persuaded that the spirit of religion cannot subsist in such a way of life.

These persons, as has been observed, may live free from debaucheries, they may be friends of religion so far as to praise and speak well of it, and admire

it in their imaginations, but it cannot govern their hearts and be the spirit of their actions till they change their way of life and let religion give laws to the use and spending of their estate.

For a woman that loves dress, that thinks no expense too great to bestow upon the adorning of her person, cannot stop there. For that temper draws a thousand other follies along with it, and will render the whole course of her life, her business, her conversation, her hopes, her fears, her tastes, her pleasures and diversions, all suitable to it.

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20. As in the matter of temperance, there is no rule but the sobriety that is according to the doctrines and spirit of our religion; so, in the matter of apparel there is no rule to be observed but such a right use of clothes as is strictly according to the doctrines and spirit of our religion. To pretend to make the way of the world our measure in these things is as weak and absurd

as to make the way of the world the measure of our sobriety, abstinence, or humility. It is a pretence that is exceedingly absurd in the mouths of Christians, who are to be so far from conforming to the fashions of this life that to have overcome the world is made an essential mark of Christianity.

This, therefore, is the way that you are to judge of the crime of vain apparel: you are to consider it as an offence against the proper use of clothes, as covetousness is an offence against the proper use of money; you are to consider it as an indulgence of proud and unreasonable tempers, as an offence against the humility and sobriety of the Christian spirit; you are to consider it as an offence against all those doctrines that require you to do all to the glory of God, that require you to make a right use of your talents; you are to consider it as an offence against all those texts of Scripture that command you to love your neighbour as yourself, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, and do

all works of charity that you are able, so that you must not deceive yourself with saying, Where can be the harm of clothes? for the covetous man might as well say, Where can be the harm of gold and silver? but you must consider that it is a great deal of harm to want that wise, and reasonable, and humble state of heart, which is according to the spirit of religion, and which no one can have, in the manner that he ought to have it, who indulges himself either in the vanity of dress or the desire of riches.

There is, therefore, nothing right in the use of clothes, or in the use of anything else in the world, but the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel. Every other use of things (however polite and fashionable in the world) distracts and disorders the heart and is inconsistent with that inward state of piety, that purity of heart, that wisdom of mind and regularity of affection, which Christianity requireth.

If you would be a good Christian

there is but one way—you must live wholly unto God, and if you would live wholly unto God, you must live according to the wisdom that comes from God; you must act according to right judgments of the nature and value of things; you must live in the exercise of holy and heavenly affections, and use all the gifts of God to His praise and glory.

THIRTEENTH DAY

21. A MAN is not to be reasonable and holy because he is a priest or a father of a family; but he is to be a pious priest and a good father, because piety and goodness are the laws of human nature. Could any man please God without living according to reason and order there would be nothing displeasing to God in an idle priest or a reprobate father. He, therefore, that abuses his reason is like him that abuses the priesthood; and he that neglects the holiness of the Christian life is as the man that disregards the most important trust.

If a man were to choose to put out his eyes rather than enjoy the light and see the works of God; if he should voluntarily kill himself by refusing to eat and drink, everyone would own that such a one was a rebel against God, that justly deserved His highest indignation. You would not say that this was only sinful in a priest or a

master of a family, but in every man as such.

Now wherein does the sinfulness of this behaviour consist? Does it not consist in this, that he abuses his nature and refuses to act that part for which God has created him? But if this be true, then all persons that abuse their reason, that act a different part from that for which God created them, are like this man, rebels against God, and on the same account subject to His wrath.

Let us suppose that this man, instead of putting out his eyes, had only employed them in looking at ridiculous things or shut them up in sleep; that instead of starving himself to death, by not eating at all, he should turn every meal into a feast and eat and drink like an epicure, could he be said to have lived more to the Glory of God? Could he any more be said to act the part for which God had created him than if he had put out his eyes and starved himself to death?

Now do but suppose a man acting unreasonably; do but suppose him extinguishing his reason instead of putting out his eyes, and living in a course of folly and impertinence instead of starving himself to death, and then you have found out as great a rebel against God.

For he that puts out his eyes, or murders himself, has only this guilt, that he abuses the powers that God has given him; that he refuses to act that part for which he was created, and puts himself into a state that is contrary to the Divine will. And surely this is the guilt of everyone that lives an unreasonable, unholy, and foolish life.

As, therefore, no particular state, or private life, is an excuse for the abuse of our bodies, or self-murder, so no particular state, or private life, is an excuse for the abuse of our reason or the neglect of the holiness of the Christian religion. For surely it is as much the will of God that we should make the best use of our rational faculties, that

we should conform to the purity and holiness of Christianity, as it is the will of God that we should use our eyes and eat and drink for the preservation of our lives.

Until, therefore, a man can show that he sincerely endeavours to live according to the will of God, to be that which God requires him to be; until he can show that he is striving to live according to the holiness of the Christian religion; whosoever he be, or wheresoever he be, he has all that to answer for that they have who refuse to live, who abuse the greatest trusts, and neglect the highest calling in the world.

22. Everybody acknowledges that all orders of men are to be equally and ex-exactly honest and faithful; there is no exception to be made in these duties for any private or particular state of life. Now, if we would but attend to the reason and nature of things, if we would but consider the nature of God and the nature of man, we should find

the same necessity for every other right use of our reason, for every grace or religious temper of the Christian life, we should find it as absurd to suppose that one man must be exact in piety, and another need not, as to suppose that one man must be exact in honesty but another need not; for Christian humility, sobriety, devotion, and piety, are as great and necessary parts of a reasonable life as justice and honesty. And, on the other hand, pride, sensuality, and covetousness are as great disorders of the soul, are as high an abuse of our reason and as contrary to God, as cheating and dishonesty. Theft and dishonesty seem, indeed, to vulgar eyes, to be greater sins, because they are so hurtful to civil society, and are so severely punished by human laws. But if we consider mankind in a higher view, as God's order or society of rational beings that are to glorify Him by the right use of their reason, and by acting conformably to the order of their nature, we shall find that every

temper that is equally contrary to reason and order, that opposes God's ends and designs, and disorders the beauty and glory of the rational world, is equally sinful in man and equally odious to God. This would show us that the sin of sensuality is like the sin of dishonesty, and renders us as great objects of the Divine displeasure.

Again, if we consider mankind in a farther view, as a redeemed order of fallen spirits, that are baptised into a fellowship with the Son of God, to be temples of the Holy Ghost; to live according to his holy inspirations; to offer to God the reasonable sacrifice of a humble, pious, and thankful life; to purify themselves from the disorders of their fall; to make a right use of the means of grace in order to be sons of eternal glory; if we look at mankind in this true light then we shall find that all tempers that are contrary to this holy society, that are abuses of this infinite mercy, all actions that make us unlike to Christ, that disgrace His body,

that abuse the means of grace and oppose our hopes of glory, have everything in them that can make us for ever odious unto God. So that though pride and sensuality, and other vices of the like kind, do not hurt civil society as cheating and dishonesty do, yet they hurt that society and oppose those ends which are greater and more glorious in the eyes of God than all the societies that relate to this world.

Nothing, therefore, can be more false than to imagine that because we are private persons that have taken upon us no charge or employment of life, therefore we may live more at large, indulge our appetites, and be less careful of the duties of piety and holiness; for it is as good an excuse for cheating and dishonesty. Because he that abuses his reason, that indulges himself in lust and sensuality, and neglects to act the wise and reasonable part of a true Christian, has everything in his life to render him hateful to God that is to be found in cheating and dishonesty.

If, therefore, you rather choose to be an idle epicure than to be unfaithful; if you rather choose to live in lust and sensuality than to injure your neighbour in his goods, you have made no better a provision for the favour of God than he that rather chooses to rob a house than to rob a church.

For the abusing of our own nature is as great a disobedience against God as the injuring our neighbour; and he that wants piety towards God has done as much to damn himself, as he that wants honesty towards men. Every argument, therefore, that proves it necessary for all men in all stations of life to be truly honest, proves it equally necessary for all men in all stations of life to be truly holy and pious and do all things in such a manner as is suitable to the glory of God.

FOURTEENTH DAY

23. AGAIN, another argument to prove that all orders of men are obliged to be thus holy and devout in the common course of their lives, in the use of everything that they enjoy, may be taken from our obligation to prayer.

It is granted that prayer is a duty that belongs to all states and conditions of men; now, if we inquire into the reason of this, why no state of life is to be excused from prayer, we shall find it as good a reason why every state of life is to be made a state of piety and holiness in all its parts.

For the reason why we are to pray unto God and glorify Him with hymns and psalms of thanksgiving, is this: because we are to live wholly unto God and glorify Him all possible ways. It is not because the praises of words, or forms of thanksgiving, are more particularly parts of piety, or more the worship of God than other things, but

it is because they are possible ways of expressing our dependence, our obedience and devotion to God. Now, if this be the reason of verbal praises and thanksgivings to God, because we are to live unto God all possible ways, then it plainly follows that we are equally obliged to worship and glorify God in all other actions that can be turned into acts of piety and obedience to Him. And, as actions are of much more significance than words, it must be a much more acceptable worship of God to glorify Him in all the actions of our common life than with any little form of words at any particular times.

Thus, if God is to be worshipped with forms of thanksgivings, he that makes it a rule to be content and thankful in every part and accident of his life because it comes from God, praises God in a much higher manner than he that has some set time for singing of psalms. He that dares not say an ill-natured word or do an

unreasonable thing because he considers God as everywhere present, performs a better devotion than he that dares not miss the church. To live in the world as a stranger and a pilgrim, using all its enjoyments as if we used them not, making all our actions so many steps towards a better life, is offering a better sacrifice to God than any forms of holy and heavenly prayers.

To be humble in all our actions, to avoid every appearance of pride and vanity, to be meek and lowly in our words, actions, dress, behaviour, and designs, in imitation of our blessed Saviour, is worshipping God in a higher manner than they who have only times to fall low on their knees in devotions. He that contents himself with necessaries that he may give the remainder to those that want it; that dares not to spend any money foolishly because he considers it as a talent from God which must be used according to His will, praises God

with something that is more glorious than songs of praise.

He that has appointed times for the use of wise and pious prayers, performs a proper instance of devotion; but he that allows himself no times, nor any places, nor any actions but such as are strictly conformable to wisdom and holiness, worships the Divine nature with the most true and substantial devotion. For who does not know that it is better to be pure and holy than to talk about purity and holiness? Nay, who does not know that a man is to be reckoned no farther pure or holy or just than as he is pure and holy and just in the common course of his life? But if this be plain, then it is also plain that it is better to be holy than to have holy prayers.

Prayers, therefore, are so far from being a sufficient devotion that they are the smallest parts of it. We are to praise God with words and prayers because it is a possible way of glorifying God, who has given us such faculties

as may be so used. But then as words are but small things in themselves, as times of prayer are but little, if compared with the rest of our lives, so that devotion which consists in times and forms of prayer is but a very small thing if compared to that devotion which is to appear in every other part and circumstance of our lives.

Again, as it is an easy thing to worship God with forms of words and to observe times of offering them unto Him, so it is the smallest kind of piety. And, on the other hand, as it is more difficult to worship God with our substance, to honour him with the right use of our time, to offer to Him the continual sacrifice of self-denial and mortification; as it requires more piety to eat and drink only for such ends as may glorify God, to undertake no labour, nor allow of any diversion but where we can act in the name of God; as it is more difficult to sacrifice all our corrupt tempers, correct all our passions, and make piety to God the

rule and measure of all the actions of our common life, so the devotion of this kind is a much more acceptable service unto God than those words of devotion which we offer to Him either in the church or in our closet.

Every sober reader will easily perceive that I do not intend to lessen the true and great value of prayers, either public or private, but only to show him that they are certainly but a very slender part of devotion when compared to a devout life.

24. To see this in a yet clearer light, let us suppose a person to have appointed times for praising God with psalms and hymns and to be strict in the observation of them; let it be supposed also that in his common life he is restless and uneasy, full of murmurings and complaints at everything, never pleased but by chance, as his temper happens to carry him, but murmuring and repining at the very seasons and having something to dislike

in everything that happens to him. Now, can you conceive anything more absurd and unreasonable than such a character as this? Is such a one to be reckoned thankful to God because he has forms of praise which he offers to Him? Nay, is it not certain that such forms of praise must be so far from being an acceptable devotion to God that they must be abhorred as an abomination? Now the absurdity which you see in this instance is the same in any other part of our life; if our common life hath any contrariety to our prayers, it is the same abomination as songs of thanksgiving in the mouths of murmurers.

Bended knees whilst you are clothed with pride; heavenly petitions whilst you are hoarding up treasures upon earth; holy devotions whilst you live in the follies of the world; prayers of meekness and charity whilst your heart is the seat of pride and resentment; hours of prayer whilst you give up days and years to idle diversions, impertinent

visits and foolish pleasures, are as absurd, unacceptable services to God as forms of thanksgiving from a person that lives in repinings and discontent.

So that unless the common course of our lives be according to the common spirit of our prayers, our prayers are so far from being a real or sufficient degree of devotion that they become an empty lip-labour, or, what is worse, a notorious hypocrisy.

Seeing, therefore, we are to make the spirit and temper of our prayers the common spirit and temper of our lives, this may serve to convince us that all orders of people are to labour and aspire after the same utmost perfection of the Christian life. For as all Christians are to use the same holy and heavenly devotions, as they are all with the same earnestness to pray for the Spirit of God, so is it a sufficient proof that all orders of people are, to the utmost of their power, to make their life agreeable to that one Spirit for which they are all to pray.

FIFTEENTH DAY

25. THE Son of God did not come from above to add an external form of worship to the several ways of life that are in the world, and so to leave people to live as they did before, in such tempers and enjoyments as the fashion and spirit of the world approves; but as He came down from Heaven altogether Divine and heavenly in His own nature, so it was to call mankind to a Divine and heavenly life; to the highest change of their own nature and temper; to be born again of the Holy Spirit; to walk in the wisdom and light and love of God, and to be like Him to the utmost of their power; to renounce all the most plausible ways of the world, whether of greatness, business, or pleasure; to a mortification of all their most agreeable passions; and to live in such wisdom and purity and holiness as might fit them to be glorious in the enjoyment of God to all eternity.

Whatever, therefore, is foolish, ridiculous, vain, or earthly, or sensual, in the life of a Christian is something that ought not to be there; it is a spot and a defilement that must be washed away with tears of repentance. But if anything of this kind runs through the course of our whole life, if we allow ourselves in things that are either vain, foolish, or sensual, we renounce our profession.

For as sure as Jesus Christ was wisdom and holiness, as sure as He came to make us like Himself and to be baptised into His Spirit, so sure is it that none can be said to keep to their Christian profession but they who, to the utmost of their power, live a wise and holy and heavenly life. This, and this alone, is Christianity; an universal holiness in every part of life, a heavenly wisdom in all our actions, not conforming to the spirit and temper of the world, but turning all worldly enjoyments into means of piety and devotion to God.

SIXTEENTH DAY

26. HE that is endeavouring to subdue and root out of his mind all those passions of pride, envy, and ambition which religion opposes, is doing more to make himself happy, even in this life, than he that is contriving means to indulge them. For these passions are the causes of all the disquiets and vexations of human life; they are the dropsies and fevers of our minds, vexing them with false appetites and restless cravings after such things as we do not want, and spoiling our taste for those things which are our proper good.

Do but imagine that you somewhere or other saw a man that proposed reason as the rule of all his actions; that had no desires but after such things as nature wants and religion approves; that was as pure from all the motions of pride, envy, and covetousness as from thoughts of murder; that in this freedom from worldly

passions he had a soul full of Divine love, wishing and praying that all men may have what they want of worldly things and be partakers of eternal glory in the life to come. Do but fancy a man living in this manner and your own conscience will immediately tell you that he is the happiest man in the world, and that it is not in the power of the richest fancy to invent any higher happiness in the present state of life.

And, on the other hand, if you suppose him to be in any degree less perfect; if you suppose him but subject to one foolish fondness or vain passion, your own conscience will again tell you that he so far lessens his own happiness and robs himself of the true enjoyment of his other virtues. So true is it that the more we live by the rules of religion, the more peaceful and happy do we render our lives.

Again, as it thus appears that real happiness is only to be had from the greatest degrees of piety, the greatest

denials of our passions, and the strictest rules of religion, so the same truth will appear from a consideration of human misery. If we look into the world and view the disquiets and troubles of human life, we shall find that they are all owing to our violent and irreligious passions.

Now, all trouble and uneasiness is founded in the want of something or other; would we, therefore, know the true cause of our trouble and disquiets we must find out the cause of our wants; because that which creates and increaseth our wants, does, in the same degree, create and increase our troubles and disquiets.

God Almighty has sent us into the world with very few wants; meat and drink and clothing are the only things necessary in life, and as these are only our present needs, so the present world is well furnished to supply these needs.

If a man had half the world in his power he can make no more of it than this; as he wants it only to

support an animal life, so is it unable to do anything else for him, or to afford him any other happiness.

This is the state of man: born with few wants and into a large world very capable of supplying them. So that one would reasonably suppose that men should pass their lives in content and thankfulness to God; at least that they should be free from violent disquiets and vexations, as being placed in a world that has more than enough to relieve all their wants.

SEVENTEENTH DAY

27. WHO would complain of the severe strictness of a law that, without any exception, forbade the putting of dust into our eyes? Who could think it too rigid that there were no abatements? Now, this is the strictness of religion: it requires nothing of us strictly or without abatements, but where every degree of the thing is wrong, where every indulgence does us some hurt.

If religion forbids all instances of revenge, without any exception, it is because all revenge is of the nature of poison; and though we do not take so much as to put an end to life, yet if we take any at all it corrupts the whole mass of blood and makes it difficult to be restored to our former health.

If religion commands an universal charity, to love our neighbour as ourselves, to forgive and pray for all our enemies without any reserve, it is because all degrees of love are degrees

of happiness that strengthen and support the Divine life of the soul, and are as necessary to its health and happiness as proper food is necessary to the health and happiness of the body.

If religion has laws against laying up treasures upon earth and commands us to be content with food and raiment, it is because every other use of the world is abusing it to our own vexation and turning all its conveniences into snares and traps to destroy us. It is because this plainness and simplicity of life secures us from the cares and pains of restless pride and envy, and makes it easier to keep that straight road that will carry us to eternal life.

If religion saith, 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor,' it is because there is no other natural or reasonable use of our riches, no other way of making ourselves happier for them; it is because it is as strictly right to give others that which we do not want ourselves as it is right to use so much as our own wants require. For if a man

has more food than his own nature requires, how base and unreasonable is it to invent foolish ways of wasting it, and make sport for his own full belly rather than let his fellow-creatures have the same comfort from food which he hath had. It is so far, therefore, from being a hard law of religion to make this use of our riches that a reasonable man would rejoice in that religion which teaches him to be happier in that which he gives away than in that which he keeps for himself; which teaches him to make spare food and raiment be greater blessings to him than that which feeds and clothes his own body.

28. If religion requires us sometimes to fast and deny our natural appetites, it is to lessen that struggle and war that is in our nature, it is to render our bodies fitter instruments of purity, and more obedient to the good motions of Divine grace; it is to dry up the springs of our passions that war against the

soul, to cool the flame of our blood and render the mind more capable of Divine meditations. So that although these abstinences give some pain to the body, yet they so lessen the power of bodily appetites and passions and so increase our taste of spiritual joys that even these severities of religion, when practised with discretion, add much to the comfortable enjoyment of our lives.

If religion calleth us to a life of watching and prayer, it is because we live amongst a crowd of enemies and are always in need of the assistance of God. If we are to confess and bewail our sins, it is because such confessions relieve the mind and restore it to ease, as burdens and weights taken off the shoulders relieve the body and make it easier to itself. If we are to be frequent and fervent in holy petitions, it is to keep us steady in the sight of our true God and that we may never want the happiness of a lively faith, a joyful hope, and well-grounded trust in God.

If we are to pray often, it is that we may be often happy in such secret joys as only prayer can give; in such communications of the Divine Presence as will fill our minds with all the happiness that beings not in Heaven are capable of.

Was there anything in the world more worth our care, was there any exercise of the mind or any conversation with men that turned more to our advantage than this intercourse with God, we should not be called to such a continuance in prayer. But if a man considers what it is that he leaves when he retires to devotion, he will find it no small happiness to be so often relieved from doing nothing, or nothing to the purpose; from dull idleness, unprofitable labour, or vain conversation. If he considers that all that is in the world, and all that is doing in it, is only for the body and bodily enjoyments, he will have reason to rejoice at those hours of prayer which carry him to higher consolations, which raise

him above these poor concerns, which open to his mind a scene of greater things, and accustom his soul to the hope and expectation of them.

29. If religion commands us to live wholly unto God and to do all to His glory, it is because every other way is living wholly against ourselves and will end in our own shame and confusion of face.

As everything is dark that God does not enlighten ; as everything is senseless that has not its share of knowledge from Him ; as nothing lives but by partaking of life from Him ; as nothing exists but because He commands it to be, so there is no glory or greatness but what is of the glory and greatness of God.

We indeed may talk of human glory as we may talk of human life or human knowledge, but as we are sure that human life implies nothing of our own but a dependent living in God, or enjoying so much life in God, so

human glory, whenever we find it, must be only so much glory as we enjoy in the glory of God.

This is the state of all creatures, whether men or Angels; as they make not themselves so they enjoy nothing from themselves; if they are great, it must be only as great receivers of the gifts of God; their power can only be so much of the Divine power acting in them; their wisdom can be only so much of the Divine wisdom shining within them; and their light and glory only so much of the light and glory of God shining upon them.

As they are not men or Angels because they had a mind to be so themselves, but because the will of God formed them to be what they are, so they cannot enjoy this or that happiness of men or Angels because they have a mind to it, but because it is the will of God that such thing be the happiness of men and such things the happiness of Angels. But now if God be thus all in all; if His will is thus the measure

of all things and all natures ; if nothing can be done but by His power ; if nothing can be seen but by a light from Him ; if we have nothing to fear but from His justice ; if we have nothing to hope for but from His goodness ; if this is the nature of man, thus helpless in himself ; if this is the state of all creatures, as well those in Heaven as those on earth ; if they are nothing, can do nothing, can suffer no pain nor feel any happiness but so far and in such degrees as the power of God does all this ; if this be the state of things, then how can we have the least glimpse of joy or comfort, how can we have any peaceful enjoyment of ourselves but by living wholly unto that God, using and doing everything conformably to His will ? A life thus devoted unto God, looking wholly unto Him in all our actions and doing all things suitably to His glory, is so far from being dull and uncomfortable that it creates new comforts in everything that we do.

EIGHTEENTH DAY

30. I TAKE it for granted that every Christian that is in health is up early in the morning, for it is much more reasonable to suppose a person up early because he is a Christian than because he is a labourer, or a tradesman, or a servant, or has business that wants him.

We naturally conceive some abhorrence of a man that is in bed when he should be at his labour or in his shop. We cannot tell how to think anything good of him who is such a slave to drowsiness as to neglect his business for it.

Let this therefore teach us to conceive how odious we must appear in the sight of Heaven if we are in bed, shut up in sleep and darkness, when we should be praising God, and are such slaves to drowsiness as to neglect our devotions for it.

For if he is to be blamed as a slothful drone that rather chooses the lazy

indulgence of sleep than to perform his proper share of worldly business, how much more is he to be reproached that would rather lie folded up in a bed than be raising up his heart to God in acts of praise and adoration!

Prayer is the nearest approach to God, and the highest enjoyment of Him, that we are capable of in this life.

It is the noblest exercise of the soul, the most exalted use of our best faculties and the highest imitation of the blessed inhabitants of Heaven.

When our hearts are full of God, sending up holy desires to the throne of grace, we are then in our highest state, we are upon the utmost heights of human greatness; we are not before kings and princes, but in the presence and audience of the Lord of all the world, and can be no higher till death is swallowed up in glory.

On the other hand, sleep is the poorest, dullest refreshment of the body, that is so far from being intended as an enjoyment that we are forced to receive it

either in a state of insensibility or in the folly of dreams.

Sleep is such a dull, stupid state of existence that even amongst mere animals we despise them most which are most drowsy.

He, therefore, that chooses to enlarge the slothful indulgence of sleep rather than be early at his devotions to God, chooses the dullest refreshment of the body before the highest, noblest employment of the soul; he chooses that state which is a reproach to mere animals, rather than that exercise which is the glory of Angels.

31. You will perhaps say, though you rise late yet you are always careful of your devotions when you are up.

It may be so. But what then? Is it well done of you to rise late because you pray when you are up? Is it pardonable to waste great part of the day in bed because some time after you say your prayers?

It is as much your duty to rise to pray

as to pray when you are risen. And if you are late at your prayers you offer to God the prayers of an idle, slothful worshipper that rises to prayers as idle servants rise to their labour.

Farther; if you fancy that you are careful of your devotions when you are up, though it be your custom to rise late, you deceive yourself; for you cannot perform your devotions as you ought. For he that cannot deny himself this drowsy indulgence, but must pass away good part of the morning in it, is no more prepared for prayer when he is up than he is prepared for fasting, abstinence, or any other self-denial. He may indeed more easily read over a form of prayer than he can perform these duties; but he is no more disposed to enter into the true spirit of prayer than he is disposed to fasting. For sleep thus indulged gives a softness and idleness to all our tempers and makes us unable to relish anything but what suits with an idle state of mind and gratifies our natural tempers as

sleep does; so that a person who is a slave to this idleness is in the same temper when he is up; and though he is not asleep, yet he is under the effects of it, and everything that is idle, indulgent or sensual pleases him for the same reason that sleep pleases him; and, on the other hand, everything that requires care or trouble or self-denial is hateful to him for the same reason that he hates to rise. He that places any happiness in this morning indulgence would be glad to have all the day made happy in the same manner, though not with sleep yet with such enjoyments as gratify and indulge the body in the same manner as sleep does, or, at least, with such as come as near to it as they can. The remembrance of a warm bed is in his mind all the day, and he is glad when he is not one of those that sit starving in a church.

Now you do not imagine that such a one can truly mortify that body which he thus indulges; yet you might as well think this as that he can truly perform

his devotions, or live in such a drowsy state of indulgence, and yet relish the joys of a spiritual life.

For surely no one will pretend to say that he knows and feels the true happiness of prayer who does not think it worth his while to be early at it.

NINETEENTH DAY

32. WHEN you read the Scriptures you see a religion that is all life and spirit and joy in God; that supposes our souls risen from earthly desires and bodily indulgences to prepare for another body, another world, and other enjoyments. You see Christians represented as temples of the Holy Ghost, as children of the day, as candidates for an eternal crown, as watchful virgins that have their lamps always burning, in expectation of the bridegroom. But can he be thought to have this joy in God, this care of eternity, this watchful spirit, who has not zeal enough to rise to his prayers?

When you look into the writings and lives of the first Christians you see the same spirit that you see in the Scriptures. All is reality, life, and action. Watching and prayers, self-denial and mortification, was the common business of their lives.

From that time to this there has been no person like them, eminent for piety, who has not, like them, been eminent for self-denial and mortification. This is the only royal way that leads to a kingdom.

But how far are you from this way of life, or, rather, how contrary to it, if, instead of imitating their austerity and mortification, you cannot so much as renounce so poor an indulgence as to be able to rise to your prayers! If self-denials and bodily sufferings, if watchings and fastings, will be marks of glory at the day of judgment, where must we hide our heads that have slumbered away our time in sloth and softness?

You perhaps now find some pretences to excuse yourselves from that severity of fasting and self-denial which the first Christians practised. You fancy that human nature is grown weaker and that the difference of climates may make it not possible for you to observe their methods of

self-denial and austerity in these colder countries.

But all this is but pretence, for the change is not in the outward state of things but in the inward state of our minds. When there is the same spirit in us that there was in the Apostles and primitive Christians, when we feel the weight of religion as they did, when we have their faith and hope, we shall take up our cross and deny ourselves and live in such methods of mortification as they did.

Had St. Paul lived in a cold country, had he had a constitution made weak with a sickly stomach, and often infirmities, he would have done as he advised Timothy, he would have mixed a little wine with his water. But still he would have lived in a state of self-denial and mortification. He would have given this same account of himself :—' I, therefore, so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air : but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection : lest

that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.'

After all, let it now be supposed that you imagine there is no necessity for you to be so sober and vigilant, so fearful of yourself, so watchful over your passions, so apprehensive of danger, so careful of your salvation, as the Apostles were. Let it be supposed that you imagine that you want less self-denial and mortification to subdue your bodies and purify your souls than they wanted; that you need not have your loins girt and your lamps burning as they had; will you, therefore, live in a quite contrary state? Will you make your life as constant a course of softness and indulgence as theirs was of strictness and self-denial?

If, therefore, you should think that you have time sufficient both for prayer and other duties, though you rise late, yet let me persuade you to rise early, as an instance of self-denial. It is so small a one that, if you cannot comply

with it, you have no reason to think yourself capable of any other.

33. If I were to desire you not to study the gratifications of your palate in the niceties of meats and drinks, I would not insist much upon the crime of wasting your money in such a way, though it be a great one; but I would desire you to renounce such a way of life because it supports you in such a state of sensuality and indulgence as renders you incapable of relishing the most essential doctrines of religion.

For the same reason I do not insist much on the crime of wasting so much of your time in sleep, though it be a great one; but I desire you to renounce this indulgence because it gives a softness and idleness to your soul and is so contrary to that lively, zealous, watchful, self-denying spirit, which was not only the spirit of Christ and His Apostles, the spirit of all the saints and martyrs which have ever been amongst men, but must be the spirit of

all those who would not sink in the common corruption of the world.

Here, therefore, we must fix our charge against this practice; we must blame it, not as having this or that particular evil, but as a general habit that extends itself through our whole spirit and supports a state of mind that is wholly wrong.

It is contrary to piety, not as accidental slips and mistakes in life are contrary to it, but in such a manner as an ill habit of body is contrary to health.

On the other hand, if you were to rise early every morning as an instance of self-denial, as a method of renouncing indulgence, as a means of redeeming your time and fitting your spirit for prayer, you would find mighty advantages from it. This method, though it seems such a small circumstance of life, would in all probability be a means of great piety. It would keep it constantly in your head that softness and idleness were to be avoided, that self-denial was a part of Christianity. It

would teach you to exercise power over yourself and make you able by degrees to renounce other pleasures and tempers that war against the soul.

This one rule would teach you to think of others ; it would dispose your mind to exactness, and would be very likely to bring the remaining part of the day under the rules of prudence and devotion.

But, above all, one certain benefit from this method you will be sure of having, it will best fit and prepare you for the reception of the Holy Spirit. When you thus begin the day in the spirit of religion, renouncing sleep because you are to renounce softness and redeem your time, this disposition, as it puts your heart into a good state, so it will procure the assistance of the Holy Spirit ; what is so planted and watered will certainly have an increase from God. You will then speak from your heart, your soul will be awake, your prayers will refresh you like meat and drink, you will feel what you say, and

begin to know what saints and holy men have meant by fervours of devotion.

He that is thus prepared for prayer, who rises with these dispositions, is in a very different state from him who has no rules of this kind, who rises by chance, as he happens to be weary of his bed or is able to sleep no longer. If such a one prays only with his mouth, if his heart feel nothing of that which he says, if his prayers are only things of course, if they are a lifeless form of words which he only repeats because they are soon said, there is nothing to be wondered at in all this, for such dispositions are the natural effect of such a state of life.

TWENTIETH DAY

34. A DULL, uneasy, complaining spirit, which is sometimes the spirit of those that seem careful of religion, is yet, of all tempers, the most contrary to religion, for it disowns that God whom it pretends to adore. For he sufficiently disowns God who does not adore Him as a Being of infinite goodness.

If a man does not believe that all the world is as God's family, where nothing happens by chance, but all is guided and directed by the care and providence of a Being that is all love and goodness to all His creatures ; if a man does not believe this from his heart he cannot be said truly to believe in God. And yet he that has this faith has faith enough to overcome the world and always be thankful to God. For he that believes that everything happens to him for the best cannot possibly complain for the want of something that is better.

If, therefore, you live in murmurings

and complaints, accusing all the accidents of life, it is not because you are a weak, infirm creature, but it is because you want the first principle of religion—a right belief in God. For as thankfulness is an express acknowledgment of the goodness of God towards you, so repinings and complaints are as plain accusations of God's want of goodness towards you.

On the other hand, would you know who is the greatest saint in the world? It is not he who prays most or fasts most; it is not he who gives most alms, or is most eminent for temperance, chastity, or justice; but it is he who is always thankful to God, who wills everything that God willeth, who receives everything as an instance of God's goodness, and has a heart always ready to praise God for it.

All prayer and devotion, fastings and repentance, meditation and retirement, all Sacraments and ordinances, are but so many means to render the soul thus Divine and conformable to the will of

God, and to fill it with thankfulness and praise for everything that comes from God. This is the perfection of all virtues; and all virtues that do not tend to it, or proceed from it, are but so many false ornaments of a soul not converted unto God.

You need not, therefore, now wonder that I lay so much stress upon singing a psalm at all your devotions, since you see it is to form your spirit to such joy and thankfulness to God as is the highest perfection of a Divine and holy life.

If anyone would tell you the shortest, surest way to all happiness and all perfection, he must tell you to make a rule to yourself, to thank and praise God for everything that happens to you. For it is certain that whatever seeming calamity happens to you, if you thank and praise God for it, you turn it into a blessing. Could you therefore work miracles you could not do more for yourself than by this thankful spirit, for it heals with a word speaking and turns all that it touches into happiness.

TWENTY-FIRST DAY

35. ANOTHER [1] argument for humility is founded in the misery of our condition.

Now the misery of our condition appears in this, that we use these borrowed powers of our nature to the torment and vexation of ourselves and our fellow-creatures.

God Almighty has entrusted us with the use of reason, and we use it to the disorder and corruption of our nature. We reason ourselves into all kinds of folly and misery and make our lives the sport of foolish and extravagant passions; seeking after imaginary happiness in all kinds of shapes, creating to ourselves a thousand wants, amusing our hearts with false hopes and fears, using the world worse than irrational

[1] This is the second of three reasons for humility. These three reasons are the same as those urged by St. Catherine of Siena. See Gardner, *St. Catherine of Siena*, p. 17.

animals, envying, vexing, and tormenting one another with restless passions and unreasonable contentions.

Let any man but look back upon his own life and see what use he has made of his reason, how little he has consulted it, and how less he has followed it. What foolish passions, what vain thoughts, what needless labours, what extravagant projects, have taken up the greatest part of his life! How foolish he has been in his words and conversation; how seldom he has done well with judgment, and how often he has been kept from doing ill by accident; how seldom he has been able to please himself and how often he has displeased others; how often he has changed his counsels, hated what he loved and loved what he hated; how often he has been enraged and transported at trifles, pleased and displeased with the very same things, and constantly changing from one vanity to another! Let a man but take this view of his own life and he will

see reason enough to confess that pride was not made for man.

Let him but consider that if the world knew all that of him which he knows of himself; if they saw what vanity and passions govern his inside, and what secret tempers sully and corrupt his best actions he would have no more pretence to be honoured and admired for his goodness and wisdom than a rotten and distempered body to be loved and admired for its beauty and comeliness.

This is so true, and so known to the hearts of almost all people, that nothing would appear more dreadful to them than to have their hearts thus fully discovered to the eyes of all beholders.

And perhaps there are very few people in the world who would not rather choose to die than to have all their secret follies, the errors of their judgments, the vanity of their minds, the falseness of their pretences, the frequency of their vain and disorderly

passions, their uneasiness, hatred, envies, and vexations made known unto the world.

And shall pride be entertained in a heart thus conscious of its own miserable behaviour? Shall a creature in such a condition that he could not support himself under the shame of being known to the world in his real state—shall such a creature, because his shame is only known to God, to holy angels, and his own conscience—shall he, in the sight of God and holy angels, dare to be vain and proud of himself?

TWENTY-SECOND DAY

36. YOU must consider what behaviour the profession of Christianity requireth of you with regard to the world.

Now this is plainly delivered in these words: 'Who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world.' Christianity, therefore, implieth a deliverance from this world, and he that professeth it professeth to live contrary to everything and every temper that is peculiar to this evil world.

St. John declareth this opposition to the world in this manner: 'They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God.' This is the description of the followers of Christ; and it is proof enough that no people are to be reckoned Christians in reality who in their hearts and tempers belong to this world. 'We know,' saith the same Apostle, 'that we are of God,

and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' Christians, therefore, can no farther know that they are of God than so far as they know they are not of the world; that is, that they do not live according to the ways and spirit of the world. For all the ways and maxims and politics and tempers of the world lie in wickedness. And he is only of God, or born of God in Christ Jesus, who has overcome this world—that is, who has chosen to live by faith and govern his actions by the principles of a wisdom revealed from God by Christ Jesus.

St. Paul takes it for a certainty, so well known to Christians, that they are no longer to be considered as living in this world, that he thus argues from it as from an undeniable principle, concerning the abolishing of the rites of the Jewish Law: 'Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?' Here could be no argument in this but

in the Apostle's taking it for undeniable that Christians knew that their profession required them to have done with all the tempers and passions of the world, to live as citizens of the new Jerusalem, and to have their conversation in Heaven.

Our Blessed Lord Himself has fully determined this point in these words: 'They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.' This is the state of Christianity with regard to this world. If you are not thus out of, and contrary to, the world, you want the distinguishing mark of Christianity; you do not belong to Christ but by being out of the world as He was out of it.

We may deceive ourselves if we please, with vain and softening comments upon these words; but they are, and will be, understood in their first simplicity and plainness by everyone that reads them in the same spirit that our Blessed Lord spoke them. And to understand them in any lower, less significant meaning, is to let carnal

wisdom explain away that doctrine by which itself was to be destroyed.

37. The Christian's great conquest over the world is all contained in the mystery of Christ upon the Cross. It was there, and from thence, that He taught all Christians how they were to come out of and conquer the world, and what they were to do in order to be His disciples. And all the doctrines, Sacraments, and institutions of the Gospel are only so many explications of the meaning and applications of the benefit of this great mystery.

And the state of Christianity implieth nothing else but an entire, absolute conformity to that spirit which Christ showed in the mysterious Sacrifice of Himself upon the Cross.

Every man, therefore, is only so far a Christian as he partakes of this Spirit of Christ. It was this that made St. Paul so passionately express himself, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ':

but why does he glory? Is it because Christ had suffered in his stead and had excused him from suffering? No, by no means. But it was because his Christian profession had called him to the honour of suffering with Christ, and of dying to the world under reproach and contempt, as He had done upon the Cross, for he immediately adds, 'by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' This, you see, was the reason of his glory in the Cross of Christ, because it had called him to a like state of death and crucifixion to the world.

Thus was the Cross of Christ, in St. Paul's days, the glory of Christians; not as it signified their not being ashamed to own a Master that was crucified, but as it signified their glorying in a religion which was nothing else but a doctrine of the Cross that called them to the same suffering spirit, the same sacrifice of themselves, the same renunciation of the world, the same humility and meekness, the same patient

bearing of injuries, reproaches, and contempts, and the same dying to all the greatness, honours, and happiness of this world which Christ showed upon the Cross.

38. To have a true idea of Christianity we must not consider our Blessed Lord as suffering in our stead, but as our Representative, acting in our name, and with such particular merit as to make our joining with Him acceptable unto God.

He suffered and was a Sacrifice to make our sufferings and sacrifice of ourselves fit to be received by God. And we are to suffer, to be crucified, to die and rise with Christ, or else His crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection will profit us nothing.

The necessity of this conformity to all that Christ did and suffered upon our account is very plain from the whole tenor of Scripture.

First, as to His sufferings: this is the only condition of our being saved

by them, 'if we suffer' with Him, 'we shall also reign with Him.'

Secondly, as to His Crucifixion; 'knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him,' etc. Here you see Christ is not crucified in our stead; but unless our old man be really crucified with Him, the Cross of Christ will profit us nothing.

Thirdly, as to the death of Christ, the condition is this: 'If we be dead with Christ,' we believe that 'we shall also live with Him.' If, therefore, Christ be dead alone, if we are not dead with Him, we are as sure, from this Scripture, that we shall not live with Him.

Lastly, as to the Resurrection of Christ, the Scripture showeth us how we are to partake of the benefit of it: 'If ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.'

Thus you see how plainly the Scripture sets forth our Blessed Lord as our Representative, acting and suffering in

our name, binding and obliging us to conform to all that he did and suffered for us.

It was for this reason that the Holy Jesus said of His disciples, and in them of all true believers, 'They are not of this world, as I am not of this world.' Because all true believers conforming to the sufferings, Crucifixion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ, live no longer after the spirit and temper of this world, but their life is hid with Christ in God.

This is the state of separation from the world to which all orders of Christians are called. They must so far renounce all worldly tempers, be so far governed by the things of another life, as to show that they are truly and really crucified, dead, and risen, with Christ. And it is as necessary for all Christians to conform to this great change of spirit, to be thus in Christ new creatures, as it was necessary that Christ should suffer, die, and rise again, for our salvation.

TWENTY-THIRD DAY

39. HOW high the Christian life is placed above the ways of this world is wonderfully described by St. Paul in these words: 'Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.'

He that feels the force and spirit of these words can hardly bear any human interpretation of them. Henceforth, says he, that is, since the Death and Resurrection of Christ, the state of Christianity is become so glorious a state, that we do not even consider Christ Himself as in the flesh upon earth, but as a God of Glory in Heaven; we know and consider ourselves not as men in the flesh, but as fellow-members of a new society, that are to have all our hearts, our tempers, and conversation, in Heaven.

Thus it is that Christianity has placed us out of and above the world; and we fall from our calling as soon as we fall into the tempers of the world.

Now as it was the spirit of the world that nailed our Blessed Lord to the Cross, so every man that has the Spirit of Christ, that opposes the world as He did, will certainly be crucified by the world some way or other.

For Christianity still lives in the same world that Christ did; and these two will be utter enemies till the kingdom of darkness is entirely at an end.

Had you lived with our Saviour as His true disciple you had then been hated as He was; and if you now live in His Spirit the world will be the same enemy to you now that it was to Him then.

'If we were of the world,' saith our Blessed Lord, 'the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

We are apt to lose the true meaning of these words by considering

them only as historical description of something that was the state of our Saviour and His disciples at that time. But this is reading the Scripture as a dead letter, for they as exactly describe the state of true Christians at this, and at all other times, to the end of the world.

For as true Christianity is nothing else but the Spirit of Christ, so whether that Spirit appear in the person of Christ Himself or His Apostles, or followers in any age, it is the same thing; whoever hath His spirit will be hated, despised, and condemned by the world, as He was.

For the world will always love its own, and none but its own; this is as certain and unchangeable as the contrariety betwixt light and darkness.

When the Holy Jesus saith, 'If the world hate you,' He does not add by way of consolation that it may some time or other cease its hatred, or that it will not always hate them; but He only gives this as a reason for their bearing it, 'you know that it hated me,

before it hated you'; signifying that it was He, that is, His Spirit, that, by reason of its contrariety to the world, was then, and always would be, hated by it.

40. You will, perhaps, say that the world has now become Christian, at least that part of it where we live, and therefore the world is not now to be considered in that state of opposition to Christianity as when it was heathen.

It is granted, the world now professeth Christianity. But will anyone say that this Christian world is of the Spirit of Christ? Are its general tempers the tempers of Christ? Are the passions of sensuality, self-love, pride, covetousness, ambition, and vain-glory less contrary to the spirit of the Gospel now they are amongst Christians, than when they were amongst heathens? . . .

How many directions of the Gospel lie by unregarded, and how unconcernedly do particular persons read them,

for no other reason but because they seem unregarded by the Christian world!

How many compliances do people make to the Christian world without any hesitation or remorse, which, if they had been required of them only by heathens, would have been refused as contrary to the holiness of Christianity!

Who could be content with seeing how contrary his life is to the Gospel, but because he sees that he lives as the Christian world doth?

Who that reads the Gospel would want to be persuaded of the necessity of great self-denial, humility, and poverty of spirit, but that the authority of the world has banished this doctrine of the Cross?

There is nothing, therefore, that a good Christian ought to be more suspicious of, or more constantly guard against, than the authority of the Christian world.

TWENTY-FOURTH DAY

41. OUR Blessed Lord hath recommended His love to us as the pattern and example of our love to one another. As, therefore, He is continually making intercession for us all, so ought we to intercede and pray for one another.

'A new commandment,' saith He, 'I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another.'

The newness of this precept did not consist in this, that men were commanded to love one another; for this was an old precept, both of the law of Moses and of nature. But it was new in this respect, that it was to imitate a new, and, till then, unheard of example of love; it was to love one another as Christ had loved us.

And if men are to know that we are disciples of Christ, by thus loving one another according to His new example

of love, then it is certain that if we are void of this love we make it as plainly known unto men that we are none of His disciples.

There is no principle of the heart that is more acceptable to God than an universal fervent love to all mankind, wishing and praying for their happiness; because there is no principle of the heart that makes us more like God, who is love and goodness itself, and created all beings for their enjoyment of happiness.

The greatest idea that we can frame of God is when we conceive Him to be a Being of infinite love and goodness; using an infinite wisdom and power for the common good and happiness of all His creatures.

The highest notion, therefore, that we can form of man is when we conceive him as like unto God, in this respect as he can be, using all his infinite faculties, whether of wisdom, power, or prayers, for the common good of all his fellow-creatures; heartily desiring

they may have all the happiness they are capable of, and as many benefits and assistances from him as his state and condition in the world will permit him to give them.

And, on the other hand, what a baseness and iniquity is there in all instances of hatred, envy, spite, and ill-will; if we consider that every instance of them is so far acting in opposition to God, and intending mischief and harm to those creatures which God favours and protects, and preserves, in order to their happiness! An ill-natured man, amongst God's creatures, is the most perverse creature in the world, acting contrary to that love by which himself subsists, and which alone gives subsistence to all that variety of beings that enjoy life in any part of the creation.

42. 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them.'

Now, though this is a doctrine of strict justice, yet it is only an universal

love that can comply with it. For as love is the measure of our acting towards ourselves, so we can never act in the same manner towards other people till we look upon them with that love with which we look upon ourselves.

As we have no degrees of spite, or envy, or ill-will to ourselves, so we cannot be disposed towards others as we are towards ourselves till we universally renounce all instances of spite and envy and ill-will, even in the smallest degrees.

If we have any imperfection in our eyes, that made us see any one thing wrong, for the same reason they would show us a hundred things wrong.

So, if we have any temper in our hearts that makes us envious, or spiteful, or ill-natured towards any one man, the same temper will make us envious, and spiteful, and ill-natured towards a great many more.

If, therefore, we desire this Divine virtue of love, we must exercise and

practise our hearts in the love of all, because it is not Christian love till it is the love of all.

If a man could keep this whole law of love and yet offend in one point, he would be guilty of all. For as one allowed instance of injustice destroys the justice of all our other actions, so one allowed instance of envy, spite, and ill-will renders all our other acts of benevolence and affection nothing worth.

Acts of love that proceed not from a principle of universal love are but like acts of justice that proceed from a heart not disposed to universal justice.

A love which is not universal may indeed have tenderness and affection, but it hath nothing of righteousness or piety in it; it is but humour and temper, or interest, or such a love as publicans and heathens practise.

All particular envies and spites are as plain departures from the spirit of Christianity as any particular acts of injustice. For it is as much a law of Christ to treat everybody as your

neighbour, and to love your neighbour as yourself, as it is a law of Christianity to abstain from theft.

Now the noblest motive to this universal tenderness and affection is founded in this doctrine: 'God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God.'

Who, therefore, whose heart has any tendency towards God, would not aspire after this Divine temper, which so changes and exalts our nature into an union with Him?

How should we rejoice in the exercise and practice of this love, which, so often as we feel it, is so often an assurance to us that God is in us, that we act according to His Spirit, who is Love itself! But we must observe that love has then only this mighty power of uniting us to God when it is so pure and universal as to imitate that love which God beareth to all His creatures.

43. God willeth the happiness of all beings though it is no happiness to

Himself. Therefore we must desire the happiness of all beings though no happiness cometh to us from it.

God equally delighteth in the perfections of all His creatures, therefore we should rejoice in those perfections wherever we see them and be as glad to have other people perfect as ourselves.

As God forgiveth all, and giveth grace to all, so we should forgive all those injuries and affronts which we receive from others, and do all the good that we can to them.

God Almighty, besides His own great example of love, which ought to draw all His creatures after it, has so provided for us and made our happiness so common to us all that we have no occasion to envy or hate one another.

For we cannot stand in one another's way, or, by enjoying any particular good, keep another from his full share of it.

As we cannot be happy but in the enjoyment of God, so we cannot rival or rob one another of this happiness.

And as to other things, the enjoyments and prosperities of this life, they are so little in themselves, so foreign to our happiness, and, generally speaking, so contrary to that which they appear to be, that they are no foundation for envy, or spite, or hatred.

How silly would it be to envy a man that was drinking poison out of a golden cup! And yet who can say that he is acting wiser than this when he is envying any instance of worldly greatness?

How many saints has adversity sent to Heaven! And how many poor sinners has prosperity plunged into everlasting misery! A man seems then to be in the most glorious state when he has conquered, disgraced, and humbled his enemy, though it may be that same conquest has saved his adversary and undone himself.

This man had, perhaps, never been debauched but for his fortune and advancement; that had never been pious but through his poverty and disgrace.

She that is envied for her beauty may perchance owe all her misery to it, and another may be for ever happy for having had no admirers of her person.

One man succeeds in everything and so loses all; another meets with nothing but crosses and disappointments and thereby gains more than all the world is worth.

This clergyman may be undone by his being made a bishop, and that may save both himself and others by being fixed to his first poor vicarage.

How envied was Alexander when, conquering the world, he built towns, set up his statues, and left marks of his glory in so many kingdoms!

And how despised was the poor preacher St. Paul, when he was beaten with rods! And yet how strangely was the world mistaken in their judgment! How much to be envied was St. Paul! How much to be pitied was Alexander!

These few reflections sufficiently show us that the different conditions of this life have nothing in them to excite our

uneasy passions, nothing that can reasonably interrupt our love and affection to one another.

44. To proceed now to another motive to this universal love.

Our power of doing external acts of love and goodness is often very narrow and restrained. There are, it may be, but few people to whom we can contribute any worldly relief.

But though our outward means of doing good are often thus limited, yet, if our hearts are but full of love and goodness, we get as it were an infinite power, because God will attribute to us those good works, those acts of love and tender charities which we sincerely desired and would gladly have performed had it been in our power.

You cannot heal all the sick, relieve all the poor; you cannot comfort all in distress, nor be a father to all the fatherless; you cannot, it may be, deliver many from their misfortunes or teach them to find comfort in God.

But if there is a love and tenderness

in your heart that delights in these good works and excites you to do all that you can; if your love has no bounds, but continually wishes and prays for the relief and happiness of all that are in distress, you will be received by God as a benefactor to those who have had nothing from you but your good will and tender affections.

You cannot build hospitals for the incurable; you cannot erect monasteries for the education of persons in holy solitude, continual prayer, and mortification; but if you join in your heart with those that do, and thank God for their pious designs; if you are a friend to these great friends to mankind, and rejoice in their eminent virtues, you will be received by God as a sharer of such good works as though they had none of your hands, yet had all your heart.

This consideration surely is sufficient to make us look to, and watch over, our hearts with all diligence; to study the improvement of our inward tempers, and aspire after every height and per-

fection of a loving, charitable, and benevolent mind.

And, on the other hand, we may hence learn the great evil and mischief of all wrong turns of mind, of envy, spite, hatred, and ill-will. For if the goodness of our hearts will entitle us to the reward of good actions which we never performed, it is certain that the badness of our hearts, our envy, ill-nature, and hatred will bring us under the guilt of actions that we have never committed.

As he that lusteth after a woman shall be reckoned an adulterer, though he has only committed the crime in his heart, so the malicious, spiteful, ill-natured man, that only secretly rejoices at evil, shall be reckoned a murderer though he has shed no blood.

Since, therefore, our hearts, which are always naked and open to the eyes of God, give such an exceeding extent and increase, either to our virtues or vices, it is our best and greatest business to govern the motions of our hearts, to watch, correct, and improve the inward state and temper of our souls.

TWENTY-FIFTH DAY

45. NOW there is nothing that so much exalts our souls as this heavenly love; it cleanses and purifies like a holy fire, and all ill tempers fall away before it. It makes room for all virtues and carries them to their greatest height. Everything that is good and holy grows out of it, and it becomes a continual source of all holy desires and pious practices.

By love I do not mean any natural tenderness, which is more or less in people according to their constitutions, but I mean a larger principle of the soul, founded in reason and piety, which makes us tender, kind, and benevolent to all our fellow-creatures, as creatures of God, and for His sake.

It is this love that loves all things in God, as His creatures, as the images of His power, as the creatures of His goodness, as parts of His family, as members of His society, that becomes a holy principle of all great and good actions.

The love, therefore, of our neighbour is only a branch of our love to God. For when we love God with all our hearts, and with all our souls, and with all our strength, we shall necessarily love those beings that are so nearly related to God, that have everything from Him, and are created by Him to be objects of His own eternal love. If I hate or despise any one man in the world, I hate something that God cannot hate, and despise that which He loves.

And can I think that I love God with all my heart whilst I hate that which belongs only to God, which has no other master but Him, which bears His image, is part of His family, and exists only by the continuance of His love towards it?

It was the impossibility of this that made St. John say that 'If any man saith he loveth God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.'

These reasons sufficiently show us that no love is holy or religious till it becomes universal.

For if religion requires me to love all persons, as God's creatures, that belong to Him, that bear His image, enjoy His protection, and make parts of His family and household; if these are the great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with any one man in the world, they are the same great and necessary reasons why I should live in love and friendship with every man in the world and, consequently, I offend against all these reasons and break through all these ties and obligations whenever I want love towards any one man. The sin, therefore, of hating or despising any one man is like the sin of hating all God's creation; and the necessity of loving any one man is the same necessity of loving every man in the world. And though many people may appear to us ever so sinful, odious, or extravagant in their conduct, we must never look upon that as the least motive for any contempt or disregard of them, but look upon them with the greater compassion

as being in the most pitiable condition that can be.

46. As it was the sins of the world that made the Son of God become a compassionate suffering Advocate for all mankind, so no one is of the Spirit of Christ but he that has the utmost compassion for sinners. Nor is there any greater sign of your own perfection than when you find yourself all love and compassion towards them that are very weak and defective. And, on the other hand, you have never less reason to be pleased with yourself than when you find yourself most angry and offended at the behaviour of others. All sin is certainly to be hated and abhorred wherever it is; but then we must set ourselves against sin as we do against sickness and diseases, by showing ourselves tender and compassionate to the sick and diseased.

All other hatred of sin which does not fill the heart with the softest, tenderest affections towards persons miserable

in it, is the servant of sin at the same time that it seems to be hating it.

And there is no temper which even good men ought more carefully to watch and guard against than this. For it is a temper that lurks and hides itself under the cover of many virtues, and, by being unsuspected, does the more mischief.

A man naturally fancies that it is his own exceeding love of virtue that makes him not able to bear with those that want it. And when he abhors one man, despises another, and cannot bear the name of a third, he supposes it all to be a proof of his own high sense of virtue and just hatred of sin.

And yet one would think that a man needed no other cure for this temper than this one reflection:

That if this had been the spirit of the Son of God, if He had hated sin in this manner there had been no redemption of the world; that if God had hated sinners in this manner, day and night, the world itself had ceased long ago.

This, therefore, we may take for a certain rule, that the more we partake of the Divine nature the more improved we are ourselves, and the higher our sense of virtue is the more we shall pity and compassionate those that want it. The sight of such people will then, instead of raising in us a haughty contempt or peevish indignation towards them, fill us with such bowels of compassion as when we see the miseries of a hospital.

47. That the follies, therefore, crimes, and ill-behaviour of our fellow-creatures may not lessen that love and tenderness which we are to have for all mankind we should often consider the reasons on which the duty of love is founded.

Now we are to love our neighbour, that is all mankind, not because they are wise, holy, virtuous or well-behaved, for all mankind neither ever was, nor ever will be so, therefore it is certain that the reason of our being obliged to love them cannot be founded in their virtue.

Again, if their virtue or goodness were the reason of our being obliged to love people, we should have no rule to proceed by, because, though some people's virtues or vices are very notorious, yet, generally speaking, we are but very ill judges of the virtue and merit of other people.

Thirdly, we are sure that the virtue or merit of persons is not the reason of our being obliged to love them, because we are commanded to pay the highest instances of love to our worst enemies; we are to love, and bless, and pray for those that most injuriously treat us. This, therefore, is demonstration that the merit of persons is not the reason on which our obligation to love them is founded.

Let us farther consider what that love is which we owe to our neighbour. It is to love him as ourselves, that is, to have all those sentiments towards him which we have towards ourselves; to wish him everything that we may lawfully wish ourselves; to be glad of

every good and sorry for every evil that happens to him, and to be ready to do him all such acts of kindness as we are always ready to do to ourselves.

This love, therefore, you see is nothing else but a love of benevolence; it requires nothing of us but such good wishes, tender affections, and such acts of kindness as we show to ourselves.

This is all the love that we owe to the best of men, and we are never to want any degree of this love to the worst or most unreasonable man in the world.

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY

48. FOR a frequent intercession with God, earnestly beseeching Him to forgive the sins of all mankind, to bless them with His providence, enlighten them with His Spirit, and bring them to everlasting happiness, is the divinest exercise that the heart of man can be engaged in.

Be daily, therefore, on your knees, in a solemn, deliberate performance of this devotion, praying for others in such forms, with such length, importunity, and earnestness as you use for yourself, and you will find all little, ill-natured passions die away, your heart grow great and generous, delighting in the common happiness of others as you used only to delight in your own.

For he that daily prays to God that all men may be happy in Heaven takes the likeliest way to make him wish for, and del ght in, their happiness on earth. And it is hardly possible for you to beseech and entreat God to make anyone happy in the highest enjoyments of

his glory to all eternity and yet be troubled to see him enjoy the much smaller gifts of God in this short and low state of human life.

For how strange and unnatural would it be to pray to God to grant health and a longer life to a sick man and at the same time to envy him the poor pleasure of agreeable medicines!

Yet this would be no more strange or unnatural than to pray to God that your neighbour may enjoy the highest degrees of His mercy and favour and yet at the same time envy him the little credit and figure he hath amongst his fellow-creatures.

When, therefore, you have once habituated your heart to a serious performance of this holy intercession you have done a great deal to render it incapable of spite and envy, and to make it naturally delight in the happiness of all mankind.

This is the natural effect of a general intercession for all mankind. But the greatest benefits of it are then received when it descends to such particular

instances as our state and condition in life more particularly require of us.

Though we are to treat all mankind as neighbours and brethren as any occasion offers, yet as we can only live in the actual society of a few, and are by our state and condition more particularly related to some than others, so when our intercession is made an exercise of love and care for those amongst whom our lot is fallen, or who belong to us in a nearer relation, it then becomes the greatest benefit to ourselves and produces its best effects in our own hearts.

If, therefore, you should always change and alter your intercessions according as the needs and necessities of your neighbours and acquaintances seem to require, beseeching God to deliver them from such or such particular evils, or to grant them this or that particular gift or blessing, such intercessions, besides the great charity of them, would have a mighty effect upon your own heart, as disposing you to every other good office, and to the exercise of every

other virtue towards such persons as have so often a place in your prayers.

This would make it pleasant to you to be courteous, civil, and condescending to all about you, and make you unable to say or do a rude or hard thing to those for whom you had used yourself to be so kind and compassionate in your prayers.

For there is nothing that makes us love a man so much as praying for him, and when you can once do this sincerely for any man you have fitted your soul for the performance of everything that is kind and civil towards him. This will fill your heart with a generosity and tenderness that will give you a better and sweeter behaviour than anything that is called fine breeding and good manners.

By considering yourself as an advocate with God for your neighbours and acquaintances you would never find it hard to be at peace with them yourself. It would be easy to you to bear with and forgive those for whom you particularly implored the Divine mercy and forgiveness.

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

49. HOW natural would it be for a master who prayed for his servants to pity their weakness and ignorance, to bear with the dulness of their understandings or the perverseness of their tempers, to reprove them with tenderness, exhort them with affection, as hoping that God would hear his prayers for them!

How impossible would it be for a master that thus interceded with God for his servants to use any unkind threatenings towards them, to damn and curse them as dogs and scoundrels, and treat them only as the dregs of the creation!

This devotion would give them another spirit and make them consider how to make proper returns of care, kindness, and protection to those who had spent their strength and time in service and attendance upon them.

Now if gentlemen think it too low an employment for their state and dignity

to exercise such a devotion as this for their servants, let them consider how far they are from the Spirit of Christ, who made Himself not only an Intercessor but a Sacrifice for the whole race of sinful mankind.

Let them consider how miserable their greatness would be if the Son of God should think it as much below Him to pray for them as they do to pray for their fellow-creatures.

Let them consider how far they are from that spirit which prays for its most unjust enemies, if they have not kindness enough to pray for those by whose labours and service they live in ease themselves.

Again, if parents should thus make themselves advocates and intercessors with God for their children, constantly applying to Heaven in behalf of them, nothing would be more likely not only to bless their children, but also to form and dispose their own minds to the performance of everything that was excellent and praiseworthy.

I do not suppose but that the generality of parents remember their children in their prayers and call upon God to bless them. But the thing here intended is not a general remembrance of them, but a regular method of recommending all their particular needs and necessities unto God, and of praying for every such particular grace and virtue for them as their state and condition of life shall seem to require.

The state of parents is a holy state, in some degree like that of the priesthood, and calls upon them to bless their children with their prayers and sacrifices to God. Thus it was that holy Job watched over and blessed his children, he sanctified them, 'he rose up early in the morning and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all.'

If parents, therefore, considering themselves in this light, should be daily calling upon God in a solemn, deliberate manner, altering and extending their intercessions as the state and growth

of their children required, such devotion would have a mighty influence upon the rest of their lives; it would make them very circumspect in the government of themselves, prudent and careful of everything they said or did lest their example should hinder that which they so constantly desired in their prayers.

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50. If all people, when they feel the first approaches of resentment, envy, or contempt towards others, or if in all little disagreements and misunderstandings whatever they should, instead of indulging their minds with little low reflections, have recourse at such times to a more particular and extraordinary intercession with God for such persons as had raised their envy, resentment, or discontent this would be a certain way to prevent the growth of all uncharitable tempers.

If you were also to form your prayer or intercession at that time to the

greatest degree of contrariety to that temper which you were then in, it would be an excellent means of raising your heart to the greatest state of perfection.

As, for instance, when at any time you find in your heart motions of envy towards any person, whether on account of his riches, power, reputation, learning, or advancement, if you should immediately betake yourself at that time to your prayers and pray to God to bless and prosper him in that very thing which raised your envy; if you should express and repeat your petitions in the strongest terms, beseeching God to grant him all the happiness from the enjoyment of it that can possibly be received, you would soon find it to be the best antidote in the world to expel the venom of that poisonous passion.

This would be such a triumph over yourself, would so humble and reduce your heart into obedience and order, that the devil would even be afraid of tempting you again in the same manner

when he saw the temptation turned into so great a means of amending and reforming the state of your heart.

Again, if in any little difference or misunderstanding that you happened to have at any time with a relation, a neighbour, or anyone else, you should then pray for them in a more extraordinary manner than you ever did before, beseeching God to give them every grace and blessing and happiness you can think of; you would have taken the speediest method that can be of reconciling all differences and clearing up all misunderstandings. You would then think nothing too great to be forgiven, stay for no condescensions, need no mediation of a third person, but be glad to testify your love and good-will to him who had so high a place in your secret prayers.

This would be the mighty power of such Christian devotion: it would remove all peevish passions, soften your heart into the most tender condescensions and be the best arbitrator of all

differences that happened betwixt you and any of your acquaintance.

The greatest resentments amongst friends and neighbours most often arise from poor punctilios and little mistakes in conduct. A certain sign that their friendship is merely human, not founded upon religious considerations or supported by such a course of mutual prayer for one another as the first Christians used.

TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY

51. YOU cannot despise a brother without despising him that stands in a high relation to God, to His Son Jesus Christ, and to the Holy Trinity.

You would certainly think it a mighty impiety to treat a writing with great contempt that had been written by the finger of God, and can you think it a less impiety to contemn and vilify a brother who is not only the workmanship, but the image, of God?

You would justly think it a great profaneness to contemn and trample upon an altar because it was appropriated to holy uses and had had the body of Christ so often placed upon it; and can you suppose it to be less profaneness to scorn and trample upon a brother who so belongs to God that his very body is to be considered as the temple of the Holy Ghost?

Had you despised and ill-treated the Virgin Mary you had been chargeable

with the impiety of despising her of whom Christ was born. And if you scorn and despise a brother you are chargeable with the impiety of despising him for whom Christ laid down His life.

And now, if this scornful temper is founded upon a disregard of all these relations which every Christian bears to God, and Christ, and the Holy Trinity, can you wonder or think it hard that a Christian who thus allows himself to despise a brother should be in danger of hell-fire?

Secondly, it must here be observed that though in these words, 'Whosoever shall say, Thou fool,' etc., the great sin there condemned is an allowed temper of despising a brother; yet we are also to believe that all hasty expressions and words of contempt, though spoken by surprise or accident, are by this text condemned as great sins and notorious breaches of Christian charity.

They proceed from great want of Christian love and meekness, and call for great repentance. They are only

little sins when compared with habits and settled tempers of treating a brother despitefully, and fall as directly under the condemnation of this text as the grossest habits of uncharitableness.

And the reason why we are always to apprehend great guilt and call ourselves to a strict repentance for these hasty expressions of anger and contempt is this: because they seldom are what they seem to be, that is, mere starts of temper that were occasioned purely by surprise or accident, but are much more our own proper acts than we generally imagine.

A man says a great many bitter things; he presently forgives himself because he supposes it was only the suddenness of the occasion, or something accidental that carried him so far beyond himself.

But he should consider that perhaps the accident or surprise was not the occasion of his angry expressions, but might only be the occasion of his angry temper showing itself.

Now as this is, generally speaking, the case, as all haughty, angry language generally proceeds from some secret habits of pride in the heart, so people that are subject to it, though only now and then as accidents happen, have great reason to repent of more than their present behaviour, to charge themselves with greater guilt than accidental passion, and to bring themselves to such penance and mortification as is proper to destroy habits of a haughty spirit.

And this may be the reason why the text looks no farther than the outward language; why it only says Whosoever shall say, Thou fool; because few can proceed so far as to the accidental use of haughty, disdainful language but they whose hearts are more or less possessed with habits and settled tempers of pride and haughtiness.

TWENTY-NINTH DAY

52. THERE is nothing wise or holy or just but the great will of God. This is as strictly true, in the most rigid sense, as to say that nothing is infinite and eternal but God.

No beings, therefore, whether in Heaven or on earth, can be wise, or holy, or just, but so far as they conform to this will of God. It is conformity to this will that gives virtue and perfection to the highest services of the angels in Heaven; and it is conformity to the same will that makes the ordinary actions of men on earth become an acceptable service unto God.

The whole nature of virtue consists in conforming to, and the whole nature of vice in declining from, the will of God. All God's creatures are created to fulfil His will; the sun and moon obey His will by the necessity of their nature; angels conform to His will by the perfection of their nature; if, therefore, you would show yourself not to

be a rebel and apostate from the order of the creation, you must act like beings both above and below you; it must be the great desire of your soul that God's will may be done by you on earth as it is done in Heaven. It must be the settled purpose and intention of your heart to will nothing, design nothing, do nothing, but so far as you have reason to believe that it is the will of God that you should so desire, design, and do.

It is as just and necessary to live in this state of heart, to think thus of God and yourself, as to think that you have any dependence upon Him. And it is as great a rebellion against God to think that your will may ever differ from His as to think that you have not received the power of willing for Him.

You are, therefore, to consider yourself as a being that has no other business in the world but to be that which God requires you to be; to have no tempers, no rules of your own, to seek

no self-designs or self-ends, but to fill some place, and act some part, in strict conformity and thankful resignation to the Divine pleasure.

To think that you are your own, or at your own disposal, is as absurd as to think that you created and can preserve yourself. It is as plain and necessary a first principle to believe you are thus God's, that you thus belong to Him, and are to act and suffer all in a thankful resignation to His pleasure, as to believe that in Him you 'live and move and have your being.'

53. Resignation to the Divine will signifies a cheerful approbation and thankful acceptance of everything that comes from God. It is not enough patiently to submit, but we must thankfully receive and fully approve of everything that by the order of God's providence happens to us.

For there is no reason why we should be patient but what is as good and

strong a reason why we should be thankful. If we were under the hands of a wise and good physician, that could not mistake or do anything to us but what certainly tended to our benefit, it would not be enough to be patient, and abstain from murmurings against such a physician, but it would be as great a breach of duty and gratitude to him not to be pleased and thankful for what he did as it would be to murmur at him.

Now, this is our true state with relation to God; we cannot be said so much as to believe in Him unless we believe Him to be of infinite wisdom. Every argument, therefore, for patience under His disposal of us, is as strong an argument for approbation and thankfulness for everything that He does to us. And there needs no more to dispose us to this gratitude towards God than a full belief in Him, that He is this Being of infinite wisdom, love, and goodness.

Do but assent to this truth in the

same manner as you assent to things of which you have no doubt, and then you will cheerfully approve of everything that God has already approved for you.

For as you cannot possibly be pleased with the behaviour of any person towards you but because it is for your good, is wise in itself and the effect of his love and goodness towards you, so when you are satisfied that God does not only do that which is wise and good and kind, but that which is the effect of an infinite wisdom and love in the care of you, it will be as necessary, whilst you have this faith, to be thankful and pleased with everything which God chooses for you, as to wish your own happiness.

Whenever, therefore, you find yourself disposed to uneasiness, or murmuring at anything that is the effect of God's providence over us, you must look upon yourself as denying either the wisdom or goodness of God. For every complaint necessarily supposes

this. You would never complain of your neighbour but that you suppose you can show either his unwise, unjust, or unkind behaviour towards you.

Now, every murmuring, impatient reflection, under the providence of God, is the same accusation of God. A complaint always supposes ill-usage.

Hence, also, you may see the great necessity and piety of this thankful state of heart, because the want of it implies an accusation of God's want either of wisdom or goodness in His disposal of us. It is not, therefore, any high degree of perfection, founded in any uncommon nicety of thinking or refined notions, but a plain principle founded in this plain belief that God is a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness.

54. Now this resignation to the Divine will may be considered in two respects: First, as it signifies a thankful approbation of God's general providence over the world; secondly, as it

signifies a thankful acceptance of His particular providence over us.

First, every man is, by the law of his creation, by the first article of his creed, obliged to consent to and acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in His general providence over the whole world. He is to believe that it is the effect of God's great wisdom and goodness that the world itself was formed at such a particular time and in such a manner; that the general order of nature, the whole frame of things, is contrived and formed in the best manner. He is to believe that God's providence over states and kingdoms, times and seasons, is all for the best; that the revolutions of state and changes of empire, the rise and fall of monarchies, persecutions, wars, famines, and plagues, are all permitted and conducted by God's providence to the general good of man in this state of trial.

A good man is to believe all this with the same fulness of assent as he

believes that God is in every place, though he neither sees nor can comprehend the manner of His presence.

This is a noble magnificence of thought, a true religious greatness of mind, to be thus affected with God's general providence, admiring and magnifying His wisdom in all things, never murmuring at the course of the world or the state of things, but looking upon all around, at heaven and earth, as a pleased spectator, and adoring that invisible hand which gives laws to all motions and overrules all events to ends suitable to the highest wisdom and goodness.

THIRTIETH DAY

55. WE are as sure that nothing happens to us by chance as that the world itself was not made by chance; we are as certain that all things happen and work together for our good as that God is goodness itself. So that a man has as much reason to will everything that happens to him because God wills it, as to think that is wisest which is directed by infinite wisdom.

This is not cheating or soothing ourselves into any false content or imaginary happiness, but is a satisfaction grounded upon as great a certainty as the being and attributes of God.

For if we are right in believing God to act over us with infinite wisdom and goodness, we cannot carry our notions of conformity and resignation to the Divine will too high; nor can we ever be deceived by thinking that to be best for us which God has brought upon us.

For the providence of God is not more concerned in the government of night

and day and the variety of seasons, than in the common course of events that seem most to depend upon the mere wills of men. So that it is as strictly right to look upon all worldly accidents and changes, all the various turns and alternations in your own life, to be as truly the effects of Divine providence as the rising and setting of the sun or the alternations of the seasons of the year. As you are, therefore, always to adore the wisdom of God in the direction of these things, so it is the same reasonable duty always to magnify God as an equal Director of everything that happens to you in the course of your own life.

This holy resignation and conformity of your will to the will of God being so much the true state of piety, I hope you will think it proper to make this hour of prayer a constant season of applying to God for so great a gift; that, by thus constantly praying for it, your heart may be habitually disposed towards it and always in a state of readiness to look

at everything as God's, and to consider Him in everything, that so everything that befalls you may be received in the spirit of piety and made a means of exercising some virtue.

There is nothing that so powerfully governs the heart, that so strongly excites us to wise and reasonable actions as a true sense of God's presence; but as we cannot see or apprehend the essence of God, so nothing will so constantly keep us under a lively sense of the presence of God as this holy resignation which attributes everything to Him and receives everything as from Him.

Could we see a miracle from God how would our thoughts be affected with a holy awe and veneration of His presence! But if we consider everything as God's doing, either by order or permission, we shall then be affected with common things as they would be who saw a miracle.

For as there is nothing to affect you in a miracle but as it is the action of

God and bespeaks His presence, so when you consider God as acting in all things and all events, then all things will become venerable to you like miracles, and fill you with the same awful sentiments of the Divine presence.

Now you must not reserve the exercise of this pious temper to any particular times or occasions, or fancy how resigned you will be to God if such or such trials should happen. For this is amusing yourself with the notion or idea of resignation instead of the virtue itself.

Do not, therefore, please yourself with thinking how piously you would act and submit to God in a plague, or famine, or persecution, but be intent upon the perfection of the present day; and be assured that the best way of showing a true zeal is to make little things the occasions of great piety.

Begin therefore in the smallest matters and most ordinary occasions, and accustom your mind to the daily exercise of this pious temper in the lowest occurrences of life. And when a contempt,

an affront, a little injury, loss or disappointment, or the smallest events of every day, continually raise your mind to God in proper acts of resignation, then you may justly hope that you shall be numbered amongst those that are resigned and thankful to God in the greatest trials and afflictions.

THIRTY-FIRST DAY

56. AT all the stated hours of prayer it will be of great benefit to you to have something fixed and something at liberty in your devotions.

You should have some fixed subject which is constantly to be the chief matter of your prayer at that particular time, and yet have liberty to add such other petitions as your condition may then require.

For instance: as the morning is to you the beginning of a new life; as God has then given you a new enjoyment of yourself and a fresh entrance into the world, it is highly proper that your first devotions should be a praise and thanksgiving to God as for a new creation, and that you should offer and devote body and soul, all that you are and all that you have, to His service and glory.

Receive, therefore, every day as a resurrection from death, as a new enjoyment of life; meet every rising

sun with such sentiments of God's goodness as if you had seen it and all things new created upon your account; and under the sense of so great a blessing let your joyful heart praise and magnify so good and glorious a Creator.

Let, therefore, praise and thanksgiving and oblation of yourself unto God, be always the fixed and certain subject of your first prayers in the morning; and then take the liberty of adding such other devotions as the accidental difference of your state, or the accidental difference of your heart shall then make most needful and expedient for you.

For one of the greatest benefits of private devotion consists in rightly adapting our prayers to those two conditions—the difference of our state and the difference of our hearts.

By the difference of our state is meant the difference of our external state or condition, as of sickness, health, pains, losses, disappointments, troubles, particular mercies or judgments from God;

all sorts of kindnesses, injuries, or reproaches from other people.

Now as these are great parts of our state of life, as they make great difference in it by continually changing, so our devotion will be made doubly beneficial to us when it watches to receive and sanctify all these changes of our state and turns them all into so many occasions of a more particular application to God of such thanksgiving, such resignation, such petitions, as our present state more especially requires.

And he that makes every change in his state a reason of presenting unto God some particular petitions suitable to that change, will soon find that he has taken an excellent means not only of praying with fervour but of living as he prays.

57. The next condition to which we are always to adapt some part of our prayers, is the difference of our hearts; by which is meant the different state of the tempers of our hearts, as of love, joy,

peace, tranquillity, dulness and dryness of spirit, anxiety, discontent, motions of envy and ambition, dark and disconsolate thoughts, resentments, fretfulness, and peevish tempers.

Now as these tempers, through the weakness of our nature, will have their succession, more or less, even in pious minds, so we should constantly make the present state of our heart the reason of some particular application to God.

If we are in the delightful calm of sweet and easy passions, of love and joy in God, we should then offer the grateful tribute of thanksgiving to God for the possession of so much happiness, thankfully owning and acknowledging Him as the bountiful Giver of it all.

If, on the other hand, we feel ourselves laden with heavy passions, with dulness of spirit, anxiety, and uneasiness, we must then look up to God in acts of humility, confessing our unworthiness, opening our troubles to Him, beseeching Him in His good time to lessen the weight of our infirmities, and to deliver

us from such passions as oppose the purity and perfection of our souls.

Now by thus watching and attending to the present state of our hearts, and suiting some of our petitions exactly to their wants, we shall not only be well acquainted with the disorders of our souls but also be well exercised in the method of curing them.

By this prudent and wise application of our prayers we shall get all the relief from them that is possible, and the very changeableness of our hearts will prove a means of exercising a greater variety of holy tempers.

Now, by all that has here been said, you will easily perceive that persons careful of the greatest benefit of prayer ought to have a great share in the forming and composing their own devotions.

As to that part of their prayers which is always fixed to one certain subject, in that they may use the help of forms composed by other persons; but in that part of their prayers which they are always to suit to the present state of

their life and the present state of their heart, there they must let the sense of their own condition help them to such kinds of petition, thanksgiving, or resignation, as their present state more especially requires.

Happy are they who have this business and employment upon their hands!

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58. If it be necessary to repent of all our sins, if the guilt of unrepented sins still continue upon us, then it is necessary not only that all our sins, but the particular circumstances and aggravations of them, be known and recollected and brought to repentance.

For if your own particular sins are left out of your confession, your confessing of sin in general has no more effect upon your mind than if you had only confessed that all men in general are sinners; and there is nothing in any confession to show that it is yours, but so far as it is a self-accusation, not of sin in general, or such as is common

to all others, but of such particular sins as are your own proper shame and reproach.

No other confession but such as thus discovers and accuses your own particular guilt can be an act of true sorrow or real concern at your own condition; and a confession that is without this sorrow and compunction of heart has nothing in it, either to atone for past sins or to produce in us any true reformation and amendment of life.

Let it be supposed that on a certain day you have been guilty of these sins; that you have told a vain lie upon yourself, ascribing something falsely to yourself through pride; that you have been guilty of detraction and indulged yourself in some degree of intemperance. Let it be supposed that on the next day you have lived in a contrary manner; that you have neglected no duty of devotion, and been the rest of the day innocently employed in your proper business. Let it be supposed that on the evening of both these days you only use the same confession in general, consider-

ing it rather as a duty that is to be performed every night than as a repentance that is to be suited to the particular state of the day.

Can it with any reason be said that each day has had its proper repentance? Is it not as good sense to say there is no difference in the guilt of these days as to say that there need be no different repentance at the end of them? Or how can each of them have its proper repentance but by its having a repentance as large and extensive and particular as the guilt of each day?

If a man is to account for his expenses at night, can it be thought a needless exactness in him to take notice of every particular expense in the day?

And if a man is to repent of his sins at night, can it be thought too great a piece of scrupulosity in him to know and call to mind what sins he is to repent of.

Farther, though it should be granted that a confession in general may be a sufficient repentance for the end of such days as have only the unavoidable

frailties of our nature to lament, yet even this folly proves the absolute necessity of this self-examination: for without this examination, who can know that he has gone through any day in this manner?

Again, an evening repentance which thus brings all the actions of the day to account, is not only necessary to wipe off the guilt of sin, but is also the most certain way to amend and perfect our lives.

For it is only such a repentance as this that touches the heart, awakens the conscience, and leaves a horror and detestation of sin upon the mind.

For instance, if it should happen that upon any particular evening all that you could charge yourself with should be this, namely, a hasty, negligent performance of your devotions, or too much time spent in an impertinent conversation; if the unreasonableness of these things were fully reflected upon and acknowledged; if you were then to condemn yourself before God for them and implore His

pardon and assisting grace, what could be so likely a means to prevent your falling into the same faults the next day?

Lastly, to conclude this chapter: Having thus examined and confessed your sins at this hour of the evening, you must afterwards look upon yourself as still obliged to betake yourself to prayer again just before you go to bed.

Represent to your imagination that your bed is your grave; that all things are ready for your interment; that you are to have no more to do with this world; and that it will be owing to God's great mercy if you ever see the light of the sun again or have another day to add to your works of piety.

And then commit yourself to sleep as into the hands of God as one that is to have no more opportunities of doing good, but is to awake amongst spirits that are separate from the body and waiting for the judgment of the last great day.[1]

[1] As stated in the Preface, the various paragraphs which constitute this section are not continuous in the original. They are taken from Chapter XXIII.

APPENDIX I

59. LET the trifling joys, the gew-gaw happiness of Feliciana, teach you how wise they are, what delusion they escape, whose hearts and hopes are fixed upon a happiness in God.

If you were to live with Feliciana but one half-year you would see all the happiness that she is to have as long as she lives. She has no more to come but the poor repetition of that which could never have pleased once but through a littleness of mind and want of thought.

She is to be again dressed fine and keep her visiting day. She is again to change the colour of her clothes, again to have a new head-dress, and again put patches on her face. She is again to see who acts best at the playhouse and who sings finest at the opera. She is again to make ten visits in a day, and be ten times in a day trying to talk artfully, easily, and politely about nothing.

She is to be again delighted with some

new fashion, and again angry at the change of some old one. She is to be again at cards and gaming at midnight, and again in bed at noon. She is to be again pleased with hypocritical compliments, and again disturbed at imaginary affronts. She is to be again pleased with her good luck at gaming, and again tormented with the loss of her money. She is again to prepare herself for a birthnight, and again to see the town full of good company. She is again to hear the cabals and intrigues of the town; again to have a secret intelligence of private amours and early notices of marriages, quarrels, and partings.

If you see her come out of her chariot more briskly than usual, converse with more spirit, and seem fuller of joy than she was last week, it is because there is some surprising new dress or new diversion just come to town.

These are all the substantial and regular parts of Feliciana's happiness, and she never knew a pleasant day in her

life but it was owing to some one or more of these things.

It is for this happiness that she has always been deaf to the reasonings of religion, that her heart has been too gay and cheerful to consider what is right or wrong in regard to eternity or to listen to the sound of such dull words as wisdom, piety, and devotion.

It is for fear of losing some of this happiness that she dares not meditate on the immortality of her soul, consider her relation to God, or turn her thoughts towards those joys which make saints and angels infinitely happy in the presence and glory of God.

But now let it be here observed that as poor a round of happiness as this appears, yet most women that avoid the restraint of religion for a gay life must be content with very small parts of it. As they have not Feliciana's fortune and figure in the world, so they must give away the comforts of a pious life for a very small part of her happiness.

And if you look into the world and observe the lives of those women whom no arguments can persuade to live wholly unto God in a wise and pious employment of themselves, you will find most of them to be such as lose all the comforts of religion without gaining the tenth part of Feliciana's happiness. They are such as spend their time and fortunes only in mimicking the pleasures of richer people, and rather look and long after than enjoy those delusions which are only to be purchased by considerable fortunes.

But if a woman of high birth and great fortune, having read the Gospel, should rather wish to be an under servant in some pious family where wisdom, piety, and great devotion directed all the actions of every day; if she should rather wish this than to live at the top of Feliciana's happiness, I should think her neither mad nor melancholy, but that she judged as rightly of the spirit of the Gospel as if she had rather wished to be poor

Lazarus at the gate than to be the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day.

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60. Negotius is a temperate, honest man. He served his time under a master of great trade, but has, by his own management, made it a more considerable business than ever it was before. For thirty years last past he has written fifty or sixty letters in a week, and is busy in corresponding with all parts of Europe. The general good of trade seems to Negotius to be the general good of life; whomsoever he admires, whatever he commends or condemns, either in Church or State, is admired, commended, or condemned with some regard to trade.

As money is continually pouring in upon him, so he often lets it go in various kinds of expense and generosity, and sometimes in ways of charity.

Negotius is always ready to join in

any public contribution. If a purse is making at any place where he happens to be, whether it be to buy a plate for a horse-race, or to redeem a prisoner out of gaol, you are always sure of having something from him.

He has given a fine ring of bells to a church in the country, and there is much expectation that he will some time or other make a more beautiful front to the market-house than has yet been seen in any place, for it is the generous spirit of Negotius to do nothing in a mean way.

If you ask what it is that has secured Negotius from all scandalous vices, it is the same thing that has kept him from all strictness of devotion—it is his great business. He has always had too many important things in his head, his thoughts have been too much employed to suffer him to fall either into any courses of rakery or to feel the necessity of an inward, solid piety.

For this reason he hears of the pleasures of debauchery and the

pleasures of piety with the same indifference, and has no more desire of living in the one than in the other, because neither of them consists with that turn of mind and multiplicity of business which are his happiness.

If Negotius were asked what it is which he drives at in life, he would be as much at a loss for an answer as if he were asked what any other person is thinking of. For though he always seems to himself to know what he is doing, and has many things in his head which are the motives of his actions, yet he cannot tell you of any one general end in life that he has chosen with deliberation as being truly worthy of all his labour and pains.

He has several confused notions in his head which have been a long time there, such as these, viz., that it is something great to have more business than other people; to have more dealings upon his hands than a hundred of the same profession; to grow continually richer and richer, and to raise

an immense fortune before he dies. The thing that seems to give Negotius the greatest life and spirit, and to be most in his thoughts, is an expectation that he has that he shall die richer than any of his business ever did.

The generality of people when they think of happiness, think of Negotius, in whose life every instance of happiness is supposed to meet: sober, prudent, rich, prosperous, generous, and charitable.

Let us now, therefore, look at this condition in another, but truer, light.

Let it be supposed that this same Negotius was a painful, laborious man, every day deep in variety of affairs; that he neither drank nor debauched, but was sober and regular in his business. Let it be supposed that he grew old in this course of trading and that the end and design of all this labour and care and application to business was only this: that he might die possessed of more than a hundred thousand

pairs of boots and spurs and as many greatcoats.

Let it be supposed that the sober part of the world say of him when he is dead that he was a great and happy man, a thorough master of business, and had acquired a hundred thousand pairs of boots and spurs when he died.

Now if this were really the case, I believe it would be readily granted that a life of such business was as poor and ridiculous as any that can be invented; but it would puzzle anyone to show that a man that has spent all his time and thoughts in business and hurry that he might die, as it is said, worth a hundred thousand pounds, is any whit wiser than he who has taken the same pains to have as many pairs of boots and spurs when he leaves the world.

For if the temper and state of our souls be our whole state; if the only end of life be to die as free from sin and as exalted in virtue as we can; if naked as we came, so naked are we to return

and to stand a trial before Christ and His holy Angels for everlasting happiness or misery, what can it possibly signify what a man had or had not in this world? What can it signify what you call those things which a man has left behind him, whether you call them his or any one's else; whether you call them trees or fields or birds and feathers, whether you call them a hundred thousand pounds or a hundred thousand pairs of boots and spurs? I say, call them; for the things signify no more to him than the names.

APPENDIX II

61. THERE is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the Life of God in the soul. God has but one design or intent towards all mankind, and that is to introduce or generate His own Life, Light, and Spirit in them, that all may be as so many images, temples, and habitations of the Holy Trinity. This is God's will to all Christians, Jews, and Heathens. They are all equally the desire of His Heart; His Light continually waits for an entrance into all of them; His 'Wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her voice,' not here or there, but everywhere, in all the streets of all the parts of the world.

Now there is but one possible way for man to attain this salvation, or Life of God in the soul. There is not one for the Jew, another for a Christian, and a third for the Heathen. No; God is one, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the way to it is one, and that is the desire of the soul turned to

God. When this desire is alive and breaks forth in any creature under heaven, then the lost sheep is found and the Shepherd hath it upon His shoulders. Through this desire the poor prodigal son leaveth his husks and swine and hasteth to his Father; it is because of this desire that the Father seeth the son while yet afar off, that He runs out to meet him, falleth on his neck and kisseth him. See here how plainly we are taught that no sooner is this desire arisen and in motion towards God but the operation of God's Spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its first beginnings, signified by the Father's seeing and having compassion on His son whilst yet afar off, that is, in the first beginnings of his desire. Thus does this desire do all: it brings the soul to God and God into the soul; it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one life with God. Suppose this desire not to be alive, not in motion either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices, the service, the worship,

either of the Law or the Gospel, are but dead works that bring no life into the soul, nor beget any union between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the Divine Life, or operation of God, enters into them, and the new birth in Christ is formed in those that never heard of His name. And these are they 'that shall come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the Kingdom of God.'

O my God, just and good, how great is Thy love and mercy to mankind, that Heaven is thus everywhere open, and Christ thus the common Saviour to all that turn the desire of their hearts to Thee! O sweet Power of the Bruiser of the Serpent born in every son of man, that stirs and works in every man, and gives every man a power and desire to find his happiness in God! O holy Jesus, heavenly Light, that lightest every man that cometh into the

world, that redeemest every soul that followeth Thy light, which is always within him! O Holy Trinity, immense ocean of divine Love, in which all mankind live and move and have their being! None is separated from Thee, none lives out of Thy Love, but all are embraced in the arms of Thy mercy, all are partakers of Thy divine Life, the operation of Thy Holy Spirit, as soon as their heart is turned to Thee! O plain and easy and simple way of salvation, wanting no subtleties of art or science, no borrowed learning, no refinements of reason, but all done by the simple, natural motion of every heart that truly longs after God! For no sooner is the finite desire of the creature in motion towards God but the infinite desire of God is united with it, co-operates with it; and in this united desire of God and the creature is the salvation and life of the soul brought forth. For the soul is shut out of God and imprisoned in its own dark workings of flesh and blood, merely and solely

because it desires to live to the vanity of this world. This desire is its darkness, its death, its imprisonment and separation from God.

When, therefore, the first spark of a desire after God arises in thy soul, cherish it with all thy care, give all thy heart into it; it is nothing less than a touch of the divine Loadstone that is to draw thee out of the vanity of time into the riches of eternity. Get up, therefore, and follow it as gladly as the wise men of the East followed the Star from Heaven that appeared to them. It will do for thee as the Star did for them; it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus in the dark centre of thine own fallen soul.—From *The Spirit of Prayer*.

62. What blindness can well be greater than to think that a Christian kingdom as such can have any other goodness or union with Christ but that very goodness which makes the private Christian to be one with Him and a partaker of the Divine Nature? Or

that pride, wrath, ambition, envy, covetousness, rapine, resentment, revenge, hatred, mischief, and murder are only the works of the devil whilst they are committed by private or single men, but when carried on by all the strength and authority, all the hearts, hands, and voices of a whole nation, that the devil is then quite driven out of them, loses all his right and power in them, and they become holy matter of Church thanksgivings and the sacred oratory of pulpits.

Look at that which the private Christian is to do to his neighbour, or his enemy, and you see that very thing which one Christian kingdom is to do to another. Look at that which proves a man to be not led and governed by the Spirit of Christ, and you see that which proves a kingdom to be under the domination and power of Satan. Wherever pride is, there the devil is riding in his first fiery chariot; and wherever wrath is, there he has his first murdering sword at work. What is it that

fallen man wants to be redeemed from but pride and wrath, envy and covetousness? He can have no higher separation or apostasy from God, no fuller union with Satan and his angels than he has of the spirit of these tempers; they constitute that of which, whether you call it self, or Satan in him, the meaning is the same. Now suppose man not fallen into this self or Satan, and then there could be no more war or fighting in him than there was in the Word made man in our flesh. Or suppose him redeemed from his fallen nature by a new birth of the Lamb of God born in his soul, and then he can no more be hired to kill men gloriously in the field than to carry a dark lanthorn by night to a powder-plot.

Love, goodness, and communication of good is the immutable glory and perfection of the Divine Nature, and nothing can have union with God but that which partakes of this goodness. The love that brought forth the existence of all things changes not through

the fall of its creatures, but is continually at work to bring back all fallen nature and creature to their first state of goodness. All that passes for a time between God and His fallen creature is but one and the same thing, working for one and the same end, and though this is called wrath, that called punishment, curse, and death, it is all, from the beginning to the end, nothing but the work of the first creating Love, and means nothing else, does nothing else, but those works of purifying fire which must, and alone can, burn away all that dark evil which separates the creature from its first created union with God. God's Providence, from the Fall to the restitution of all things, is doing the same thing as when He said to the dark chaos of fallen nature, 'Let there be light'; He still says, and will continue saying, the same thing till there is no evil of darkness left in all that is nature and creature. God creating, God illuminating, God sanctifying, God threatening and punishing,

God forgiving and redeeming, is but one and the same essential, immutable, never-ceasing working of the Divine Nature. That in God, which illuminates and glorifies saints and angels in Heaven, is the very same working of the Divine Nature which wounds, pains, punishes, and purifies sinners upon earth. And (*N.B.*) every number of destroyed sinners, whether thrown by Noah's flood or Sodom's brimstone into the terrible furnace of a life insensible of anything but new forms of raging misery till Judgment's Day, must, through the all-working, all-redeeming Love of God, which never ceases, come at last to know that they had lost, and have found again, such a God of Love as this.

And if long and long ages of fiery pain and tormenting darkness fall to the share of many, or most, of God's apostate creatures, they will last no longer than till the great fire of God has melted all arrogance into humility, and all that is self has died in the long agonies

and bloody sweat of a lost God, which is that all-saving Cross of Christ which will never give up its redeeming power till sin and sinners have no more a name among the creatures of God.—From *An Address to the Clergy.*

APPENDIX III

63. THE greatest spirits of the heathen world, such as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, Marcus Antonius, etc., owed all their greatness to the spirit of devotion.

They were full of God; their wisdom and deep contemplations tended only to deliver men from the vanity of the world, the slavery of bodily passions, that they might act as spirits that came from God and were soon to return to Him.

The youths that attended upon Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Epictetus were thus educated. Their everyday lessons and instructions were so many lectures upon the nature of man, his true end and the right use of his faculties; upon the immortality of the soul, its relation to God, the beauty of virtue, and its agreeableness to the Divine Nature; upon the dignity of reason,

the necessity of temperance, fortitude, and generosity, and the shame and folly of indulging our passions.

An education under Pythagoras or Socrates had no other end but to teach you to think, judge, act, and follow such rules of life as Pythagoras and Socrates used.

And is it not as reasonable to suppose that a Christian education should have no other end but to teach youth how to think, and judge, and act, and live according to the strictest laws of Christianity?

But, alas! our modern education is not of this kind.

The first temper that we try to awaken in children is pride, as dangerous a passion as that of lust. We stir them up to vain thoughts of themselves, and do everything we can to puff up their minds with a sense of their own abilities.

Whatever way of life we intend them for we apply to the fire and vanity of their minds, and exhort them to every-

thing from corrupt motives. We stir them up to action from principles of strife and ambition, from glory, envy, and a desire of distinction, that they may excel others and shine in the eyes of the world.

For emulation, when it is defined in its best manner, is nothing else but a refinement upon envy, or rather the most plausible part of that black and venomous passion.

And though it is easy to separate them in the notion, yet the most acute philosopher that understands the art of distinguishing ever so well, if he gives himself up to emulation will certainly find himself deep in envy.

Remember that there is but one man in the world with whom you are to have perpetual contention and be always striving to exceed him, and that is yourself.

It is much to be lamented that the feminine sex on whom so much depends,

who have the first forming both of our bodies and our minds, are not only educated in pride, but in the silliest and most contemptible part of it.

They are not, indeed, suffered to dispute with us the proud prizes of arts and sciences, of learning and eloquence, in which I have much suspicion they would often prove our superiors, but we turn them over to the study of beauty and dress, and the whole world conspires to make them think of nothing else.

For I believe it may be affirmed that for the most part there is a finer sense, a clearer mind, a readier apprehension, and gentler dispositions in that sex than in the other.

All which tempers, if they were truly improved by proper studies and sober methods of education, would in all probability carry them to greater heights of piety than are to be found amongst the generality of men.

For this reason I speak to this matter with so much openness and plainness,

because it is much to be lamented that persons so naturally qualified to be great examples of piety should, by an erroneous education, be made poor and gaudy spectacles of the greatest vanity.

But, then, they should consider that the friends to their vanity are no friends of theirs; they should consider that they are to live for themselves; that they have as great a share in the rational nature as men have; that they have as much reason to pretend to, and as much necessity to aspire after, the highest accomplishments of a Christian and solid virtue as the gravest and wisest among Christian philosophers.

They should consider that they are abused, and injured, and betrayed from their only perfection whenever they are taught that anything is an ornament in them that is not an ornament in the wisest among mankind.

It is generally said that women are naturally of little and vain minds; but this I look upon to be as false and unreasonable as to say that butchers are

naturally cruel; for as their cruelty is not owing to their nature, but to their way of life, which has changed their nature, so whatever littleness and vanity is to be observed in the minds of women, it is, like the cruelty of butchers, a temper that is wrought into them by that life which they are taught and accustomed to lead.

I desire nothing, I press nothing upon you but to make the most of human life.[1]

[1] From Chapters XXIV, XVIII, XIX. Paragraphs not continuous in the original.

APPENDIX IV

Rules for Private Devotion as Recommended in the 'Serious Call.'

1. RISE early; rise for the special purpose of prayer.

2. Keep fixed times of prayer. Law recommends prayer at rising, at nine, at noon, at three, at the end of the day (which he places at six o'clock), and upon getting into bed.

3. So far as possible keep a fixed place for devotion.

4. Have a set form but do not keep rigidly to it. Vary your devotions according to your special needs or the state of your feelings.

5. When offering praise and thanksgiving, sing. Never mind what sort of voice you have or noise you make.

6. 'Do not pray that you may be seen of men; but if your confinement obliges you always to be in the sight of others, be more afraid of being seen to

neglect, than of being seen to have recourse to prayer. . . . The privacy of our prayers is not destroyed by our having, but by our seeking, witnesses of them.'

7. Exercise your imagination when you pray.

8. Have a fixed subject for every time of prayer. Law recommends the following :—

On rising :—Praise and thanksgiving.

Before commencing the work of the day :—Prayer for a spirit of humility.

At mid-day :—Intercession for those with whom one has to do, not in a vague, general way, but with reference to their particular needs.

When the day's work is over :—Resignation ; acknowledgment of the goodness of God's Providence alike in success and misfortune.

At the end of the day : Self-examination.

Upon lying down to sleep :—*Commendatio animæ.*

Law carried out this system of devotion himself, rising regularly at five o'clock. But his midday, after work, and evening prayers seem to have been offered at a somewhat later hour than those which he suggests in the ' Serious Call.'

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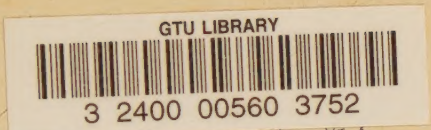

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